DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 370 438 FL 022 219

AUTHOR	Hall, John; Bankowska, Anne
TITLE	Vocational Languages: Foreign Languages for Vocational Purposes in Further and Higher Education.
INSTITUTION	Scottish Council for Research in Education, Edinburgh.
REPORT NO	ISBN-0-947833-93-5; SCRE-RR-56
PUB DATE	94
NOTE	74p.; For a summary of this report see, FL 022 131.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Tests/Evaluation Instruments (160)
EDRS PRICE	MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	Classroom Techniques; Course Organization; Curriculum Design; Educational Assessment; Educational Strategies; Foreign Countries; *Instructional Effectiveness; *Languages for Special Purposes; Language Skills; National Surveys; Postsecondary Education; Second Language Instruction; *Second Languages; Student Attitudes; *Student Evaluation; Teacher Attitudes; Teaching Methods; *Vocational Education
IDENTIFIERS	*Scotland

ABSTRACT

A study of second language instruction for vocational purposes in Scotland is reported. It used case studies to investigate: (1) teaching approaches currently used; (2) assessment of foreign language skills for vocational purposes; (3) evidence of the effectiveness of different teaching approaches; and (4) approaches considered most effective by instructors and students. Nine cases were selected to reflect a range of vocational areas, a range of skills and certification levels, and a range of experience in modern language instruction. They include two courses specifically designed for individuals needing foreign language skills for their jobs, five that were language options in vocationally-oriented programs, and two courses designed for linguists wishing to develop language skills further in a vocationally-oriented context. The report contains six chapters: (1) a description of the study's design and summary of the case studies; (2) descriptive data on the students and staff, as well as administrative arrangements of the courses; (3) a summary of data gathered from 142 students responses to a questionnaire and 27 staff interviews; (4) student skill assessment methods used in customized, non-specialist, and degree/graduate courses; (5) observations on the relationship between foreign language teaching and vocational subject teaching (including curriculum development and articulation); and (6) conclusions drawn from the study. The student questionnaire is appended. (MSE)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made from the original document.

ED 370 438

SCOPE OF INTEREST NOTICE

The ERIC Facility has assigned this document for processing to: FL

In our judgment, this document is also of interest to the Clearinghouses noted to the right. Indexing should reflect their special points of view. CE

Vocational Languages

Foreign Languages for Vocational Purposes in Further and Higher Education

John Hall
Anne Bankowska

RESEARCH REPORT SERIES

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL IN **OTHER THAN PAPER COPY** HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

R. Wake

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)"

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☒ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Vocational Languages

Foreign Languages for Vocational Purposes in Further and Higher Education

John Hall
Anne Bankowska

The Scottish Council for Research in Education

SCRE Research Report No 56

ISBN 0 947833 93 5

Copyright © 1994 The Scottish Council for Research in Education

First published March 1994

A report arising from a project (reference R/7/24) funded by the Scottish Office Education Department.

The views expressed are those of the authors and are not necessarily those of the Scottish Council for Research in Education or the Scottish Office Education Department.

Printed and bound by The Scottish Council for Research in Education, 15 St John Street, Edinburgh EH8 8JR.

Acknowledgements

We are grateful to all the staff and students in further and higher education institutions without whose cooperation this report would not have been possible. Their willingness to share their expertise and experiences with us was invaluable to the research. We hope that we have reflected their views adequately in the following pages.

We must also thank the members of our Advisory Committee, chaired by Mrs Jennifer Rees, for the help, advice, and encouragement which they gave to us at every stage of the project.

Within SCRE, particular thanks are due to Kay Young for her secretarial and administrative support throughout the project.

Our thanks are also due for the help given to us by our funding body, the Scottish Office Education Department.

John Hall

Anne Bankowska

Members of the Advisory Committee

Mrs Jennifer Rees (chair) – Scottish College of Textiles

Mr Alistair Aitken – Scottish Office Education Department

Professor Richard Johnstone – Stirling University

Mr Dennis McCartney – Stevenson College

Mr Roger Manser HMI – Scottish Office Education Department

Mr Kenneth Munro – European Community Information Office of the Commission, Edinburgh

Mr John Tibbitt – Scottish Office Education Department

Contents

	Page
List of tables	(vi)
1 Introduction	1
Research design	2
The case-studies	3
Case-studies of customised courses	4
Case-studies of vocational courses with some language input	4
Case-studies of specialist language courses	6
2 Foreign language learning: who, why and what?	9
The students	9
Who are the students?	9
To what extent do the students see their foreign language learning as driven by a vocational impulse?	9
Why are the students doing these particular courses?	10
What level(s) are the students starting from?	11
To what level(s) do the students expect to take their foreign language learning?	12
The teaching staff	14
Who are the teaching staff?	14
What are the aims of the staff in the case-study courses?	15
Institutional factors in course provision	21
Problems getting started	21
Facilities	23
Part-time teaching staff	26
3 Foreign language teaching	27
What is happening: the questionnaire data	27
What approaches do students say that they prefer?	27
Use of teaching methods in the case-studies: how do staff and student perceptions compare?	29
Reflecting on teaching: the interview data	31
Teaching methods in customised language courses	32
Teaching methods in National Certificate, Higher National and non-specialist courses	34
Teaching methods in degree and postgraduate courses	37
4 Assessment	42
Assessment in customised language courses	42
Assessment in National Certificate, Higher National and non-specialist courses	43
Assessment in degree and postgraduate courses	46

	Page
5 Relationship between foreign language teaching and vocational subject teaching	48
Development of courses	48
Degree of integration between foreign language and vocational subject teaching	50
6 Conclusions and discussion	54
Institutional factors	54
Teaching methods	55
Assessment	57
Relationship with vocational subject departments	57
Practical considerations for teaching staff and senior managers	58
References	62
Appendix A	63

Page

Tables

1	Summary of case-studies	8
2	Students' reasons for learning a foreign language	10
3	Level of students' previous qualification in the foreign language which they are currently studying	12
4	Indication of expected 'levels' of attainment	13
5	Students' views on the 'helpfulness of various teaching methods'	28
6	Student and staff views on the extent to which various teaching methods are used in case-studies	30

1 Introduction

There has been considerable expansion in modern languages provision in further and higher education in recent years. Modern languages sections in further education colleges, which had largely been confined to offering SCE courses or their equivalents (often only available as evening classes), have developed vocationally-oriented language courses in response to a perceived need to enhance the modern language skills of the workforce.

The introduction of SCOTVEC National Certificate modules and Higher National units has provided much of the impetus for the development of vocationally-oriented foreign language courses. These now extend beyond the subject areas more traditionally associated with a modern language component, such as Business Studies, Hotel Management, and Catering: the study of a foreign language is now a part of courses as diverse as Sport and Leisure and Engineering.

These developments reflect a gradual shift away from the view that the value of foreign language learning is seen in primarily academic terms although, as we shall see later, many students continue to appreciate its worth as a means of broadening their general education. The ability to use a foreign language is increasingly seen as a useful adjunct to professional expertise in a variety of work-related contexts. The fact that the term 'language training' is gaining increasing currency, particularly amongst those involved in providing customised modern languages courses, is an indication that modern languages teachers are becoming more aware of the need to tailor courses to meet the specific needs of various client groups. Irrespective of what terminology is preferred, there is evidence that some language teachers are becoming increasingly purpose-oriented in their approach.

The rapid expansion of foreign languages for vocational purposes presents teaching staff with new challenges concerning the teaching methods they use. Such issues as the appropriate balance between the development of general and specific language skills, or the degree to which the teaching of a foreign language should be integrated with the 'host' vocational subject arise as matters of interest.

It is within this broader context that the Scottish Office Education Department commissioned the Scottish Council for Research in Education to undertake a study of the teaching of foreign languages for vocational purposes in further and higher education.

RESEARCH DESIGN

The research project was originally set up with the aim of addressing the following research questions:

- what teaching approaches are currently used in the teaching of foreign languages in particular vocational contexts?
- how are foreign language skills for vocational purposes assessed?
- what evidence is there as to the effectiveness of different teaching approaches for these purposes?
- which approaches are considered most effective by lecturers and students?

A case-study design was used to address these questions. It is important to note that the case-study approach offers considerable insight into perceptions of effective teaching, but that any answers which we can offer in regard to the third question above will be in terms of these perceptions. Any approach to the research which involved assessment of the students' performance would have been outwith the scope and resources of the current project and would have had to face questions about what a valid appraisal of foreign language teaching for vocational purposes should be.

It was also hoped that one of the outcomes of the project would be the production of a set of guidelines for post-school organisations wishing to improve their teaching of foreign languages for vocational purposes. We thus sought examples of 'interesting practice' in communicative language teaching which is responsive to the students' needs with a view to identifying nine case-study courses which would cover a broad range of vocationally-oriented courses currently on offer. We selected our case-studies to reflect:

- a range of vocational areas
- a range of levels (no formal qualification; National Certificate; Higher National; degree and postgraduate)
- a range of experience in modern language provision.

Our sample included three former central institutions which had recently become universities, two of which had long experience in vocationally-oriented language provision, and one which had only recently acquired a languages section. The other case-studies were conducted in further education colleges with varying histories of involvement in foreign language teaching.

Between January and April 1993 the research team visited the nine case-study institutions. As part of this exercise they observed classes, recording their findings on an informal observation schedule. These data provided a focus for the interviews with teaching staff, particularly as regards the range of teaching methods used in the case-study courses. The classroom observation was not designed as a separate data-gathering exercise and is not reported separately from the interviews.

The research team conducted a total of twenty-seven interviews with modern languages teachers and course designers. The interviews were designed to cover the following areas:

- the history of language teaching in the institution
- the nature of the student group
- the range of teaching approaches used
- the impact of broader management issues on modern languages teaching
- how the course is assessed.

The research team also distributed a questionnaire to students attending the case-study courses in the 1992-93 session. Three hundred and ten questionnaires were distributed and one hundred and forty-two returned. This represents a response rate of forty-four per cent.

The questionnaire was designed to build up a detailed profile of the student's previous qualifications and experience in foreign languages and to canvass their views on a variety of issues. These were:

- reasons for learning a foreign language
- reasons for following the case-study course
- teaching approaches students find helpful
- teaching aproaches most commonly encountered in course
- the level* to which students thought they **ought** to be able to perform in the four modes (listening, speaking, reading and writing)
- the extent to which they thought the course they were following brought them up to the desired standard.

The following section comprises a brief description of the case-study institutions and courses. In some cases, while it had been our intention to concentrate on the teaching of **one** language to **one** student group, we found that the chosen case-study course had been developed from, or in conjunction with, another course and we expanded our information gathering to take account of this. In some case-studies groups of students from different, but related, vocational areas were doing the same course. Again, we expanded our information gathering to include this.

THE CASE-STUDIES

Many of the case-studies have certain features in common. Rather than describe each one individually, we have decided to divide them into the following three broad groups:

a) Case-studies A1 and A2: courses specifically designed for those in employment who need to develop foreign language skills for their jobs. These are 'customised' courses for specific purposes.

*The description of levels was adapted from the draft Languages Lead Body *National Standards for Languages* (July 1992).

b) Case-studies B1, B2, B3, B4 and B5: language options in vocationally-oriented courses. The students on these courses are not primarily specialist language students.

c) Case-studies C1 and C2: courses designed for linguists wishing further to develop their language skills in a vocationally-oriented context.

Case-studies of customised courses

Case-study A1 is a beginners' Japanese course for part-time students employed in various sectors of the tourist industry. The course was established with the assistance of European Community and regional authority funding. Case-study A2 is a beginners' German course for computer software engineers who have to work with German colleagues and occasionally travel to Germany. Neither course has formal entry requirements and each is tailor-made to meet the requirements of people who need to use the foreign language at work. All teaching materials are generated by the respective language departments, and reflect the type of materials or situations the students encounter in their work. In both case-studies, materials are continually being refined and developed in response to feedback from students. In case-study A2, the production of highly-specialised material based on existing models provided by the students' employer is greatly facilitated by the fact that the course designer and teacher is a native speaker of German.

Both courses are relatively short (approximately forty hours in case-study A1 and eighty hours in case-study A2). Staff/student contact time is restricted to one and a half hours per week in both cases. The course designer in case-study A2 felt that it was unreasonable to assume that people in employment could devote any more time to studying a foreign language.

In both case-studies, the emphasis was very firmly on the development of communicative competence in a highly restricted field.

It is the broader context in which case-studies A1 and A2 operate that provides the element of contrast between them. Case-study A1 is run by a large department in a college with a long tradition of modern languages teaching and a strong English as a Second Language section. In addition to fulfilling the servicing role commonly associated with modern languages departments in further education, this department also runs its own courses. In contrast, case-study A2 is located in a small department in a college with little previous history of foreign languages teaching.

Case-studies of vocational courses with some language input

Case-studies B1 and B2 are both language options on National Certificate courses. There are no formal entry requirements in either case, and the majority of students have no previous qualifications in a modern language. Case-study B1 is a National Certificate course in French and German (modules 1-3) for students seeking access to higher education through the

years. In case-study B1, the language option has proved extremely popular with the Access students, who are seen by staff as a highly-motivated group.

Case-study B2 consists of courses in French and Spanish offered to students following National Certificate programmes in Tourism and Sport and Leisure. Students complete one forty-hour module. Unlike its counterpart in case-study B1, which has five full-time members of staff and four part-time, the host college in case-study B2 is very small: until two and a half years ago there was only one part-time languages, part-time guidance post. Now the department comprises one full-time member of staff and four part-timers.

In both these case-studies, teaching is structured round commercially-produced materials, supplemented by materials produced within the respective departments. The aim in both cases is to develop aural/oral skills.

Case-studies B3 and B4 represent modern language options (Second Language for Business) in courses built upon Higher National units and have many points in common. In both cases the institutions concerned have a long history of foreign languages provision. The inclusion of a foreign languages option in a wide range of HN courses has led to a considerable expansion of the departments' servicing roles and has shifted the balance of foreign languages provision away from SCE towards modular or unitised courses. Students are drawn from a variety of vocational courses: Office Administration, Information Technology and Business Administration in case-study B3; Business Administration, Information Technology, Office Management and Marketing in case-study B4.

No prior knowledge of French or German is assumed for those embarking on beginners' courses, although in case-study B3, which was a beginners' course in French, some students had an SCE qualification (both 'O' and 'H' grade) in this language. In case-study B4, a minority of students had any previous qualification in the language they were studying. In both cases, students had between four and four and a half contact hours per week over approximately thirty weeks.

In both institutions there was considerable reliance on commercially-produced teaching materials. The department in case-study B4 is reasonably well-equipped and has its own resource base. In case-study B3, attempts to adopt a varied approach to teaching were to some extent hampered by the relative paucity of equipment and materials.

Case-study B5 is a sixty-hour option (beginners' and intermediate French and German) which students doing BSc degrees in the area of Civil Engineering may select from a range of other options. Although this course has only been running since 1991, it is based on one which was previously offered to engineering students. In the academic year 1992-3 only beginners' courses were offered in both languages, for which there

any formal qualification other than an endorsement stating that they have done the course. The students are, however, offered the opportunity to sit the examinations of an external awarding body if they wish.

The foreign languages department in this institution has considerable experience in designing and running foreign languages courses for different vocational groups. Staff consider the case-study course to be a general one, and there is no attempt to introduce subject-specific terminology in the foreign language. The aim is to develop students' communicative competence.

One of our interviewees considered the development of cultural awareness to be an important aspect of the course, even at beginners' level. Both the French and German courses were structured round the use of commercially-produced course books, although in both cases these were supplemented by material developed within the department.

There were certain administrative problems in this case-study which meant that the research team was unable to gather completed questionnaires from the students. There is therefore no information from students available.

Case-studies of specialist language courses

Case-study C1 is a four-year degree course in European Business Administration, the third year of which is spent at a higher education institution abroad. Case-study C2 is a one-year postgraduate course in marketing which includes a two-week placement in a European company. In both cases, students study two languages, one *ab initio* in case-study C2. Although *ab initio* teaching is offered in case-study C1, this is currently under review. In future, students may be required to have an SCE Higher Grade or equivalent in both French and German.

The amount of staff/student contact time is considerably greater than in the other case-studies: six hours per week in case-study C1; five hours a week in the first term, three in the second term in case-study C2. The high level of linguistic competence of the students on both courses facilitates teaching through the medium of the target language. Both departments are relatively large and enjoy good facilities, including language laboratories and video equipment.

In many respects, however, these case-studies provide more in the way of illuminating contrasts than similarities. Institutional factors account for many of these. Case-study C2 has been running for many years in an institution with a long history of foreign language provision. The course in case-study C1, on the other hand, is now in its third year. Its host department is itself of recent origin and has grown considerably since the inception of the course.

Some salient differences between these two case-studies can be attributed to the status of the period students spend abroad. In case-study

C3 students are prepared very specifically for their two week placement abroad which involves them in conducting a specific project for a British employer. The course is structured round the following linguistic exercises, most of which have a direct bearing on the activities students will be required to carry out during their placement: negotiation; presentation; consecutive and *ad hoc* interpreting; aural comprehension, précis; and translation. This placement, and the work which students do in preparation for it, provides a focus for much of the teaching in both the foreign language and the vocational areas the students are studying.

In contrast, the status and purpose of the year abroad in case-study C1 is less well defined. The students spend their third year studying abroad at a higher education institution in the country of their main foreign language.

The main features of each of the case-study courses are summarised in Table 1.

∝ *Table 1 Summary of case-studies*

Case-Study	Language(s)	Vocational area	Typical entry level	Student Nos*	Median age of students	Percentage male/female	Qualification aimed for	Special features
A1	Japanese	Tourism	Beginner	c15	'25 or over'	33/67	National Certificate (SCOTVEC)	Language only, short course for those employed in tourist industry
A2	German	Computer/ electronics industry	Beginner	c20	'25 or over'	89/11	No formal language qualification	Language only, short course run for employers in industry
B1	French or German	Business Management	Beginner	c30	'25 or over'	33/67	National Certificate (SCOTVEC)	Access course (part of SWAP). Optional language component
B2	Spanish	Sport, Leisure/ Tourism	Beginner	c16	'16-20'	67/33	National Certificate (SCOTVEC)	Language a compulsory element in various courses in related areas
B3	French	Business/Office Admin.	Beginner/ intermediate	c20	'25 or over'	20/80	Higher National (SCOTVEC)	Full-time course with optional language component. Recent HN development
B4	French or German	Business	Beginner/ intermediate	c55	'16-20'	15/85	Higher National (SCOTVEC)	Full-time course with optional language component. Recent HN development
B5	French or German	Civil Engineering	Beginner	c90	No information	No information	No formal language qualification	Language offered as an optional component within a full-time degree course.
C1	French and German	Business	Higher or equivalent (Beginner's course under review)	c25	'16-20'	11/89	Degree	Languages a major compulsory component of full-time degree course. Study main and subsidiary language
C2	Two from: French, German Spanish.	Marketing	Degree or equivalent	c27	'21-24'	43/57	Postgraduate diploma	Full-time vocational course for proficient speakers of FL. Study main and subsidiary language

*Student Numbers are approximations based on estimates of 'regular attenders' rather than 'students registered'

2 Foreign language learning: who, why and what?

THE STUDENTS

Who are the students?

Thirty-seven per cent of the sample as a whole was male and sixty-two per cent female. This was a fairly consistent pattern, except in case-studies A2 and B2 where the majority of students were male (89% and 67% respectively).

The ages of the students varied between case-studies. In some, most of the students were in the 'typical' age range of students (16-20). The postgraduate course had a slightly higher median age, in the 21-24 range, while in four of the case-studies the median age was in the '25 or over' category. These four included the two examples of short language-only courses aimed at those employed in specific industries (case-studies A1 and A2), the Access course for returners (case-study B1), and case-study B3.

The numbers of students in each case-study varied but tended to be in the range of 15-25 studying any one language. In case-studies B4 and B5, however, the numbers involved were fifty-five and ninety respectively.

To what extent do the students see their foreign language learning as driven by a vocational impulse?

Students were presented with a list of five reasons for learning a foreign language and asked to rank them in order of importance. The results are shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2 *Students' reasons for learning a foreign language*

	Rating				
	1	2	3	4	5
1. Learning a foreign language is an opportunity to broaden my general education N=137	24	26	26	18	7
2. Learning a foreign language gives me a chance to follow one of my personal interests or hobbies N=135	4	14	10	21	52
3. Learning a foreign language will be useful to me in my working life N=140	54	27	10	6	4
4. Learning a foreign language will be useful to me (for example, for foreign travel or holidays), but not as part of my job N=136	12	18	28	24	18
5. Learning a foreign language gives me an insight into the life and culture of a different society N=136	10	18	25	29	18

All figures are percentages rounded to the nearest one per cent.
Column 1 = percentage of students who rated this reason 'most important', through to column 5 = percentage of students who rated this reason 'least important'.

It is immediately noticeable that the vocational impulse rates highly amongst these students. Over half of them give the usefulness of a foreign language in their working life as their most important reason for learning a foreign language. Another quarter of the sample gave this as their second most important reason. There were no differences between any groups of students in their responses to this item.

There were, however, some differences apparent in the responses to other items. Students who had lower levels of language qualifications prior to beginning their current course tended to place a higher degree of importance on broadening their general education and on the usefulness of language learning in areas outside their working life. The degree of importance given to item 5 ('cultural insight') tended to be greater the higher the level of previous language qualification of the students.

Thirty-four respondents also offered additional reasons which were important to them. Of these thirty-four, twenty-six cited possible future job mobility within the EC as an important factor in their language learning. This was particularly apparent in responses from students in case-studies C2 and B4.

Why are the students doing these particular courses?

Given the vocational importance of language learning to the students, were there any reasons why they were studying these particular courses? This tended to vary with the nature of the courses. For example, in case-study A2 (customised provision for employers), the majority of the respondents (71%) simply stated that they were doing the course because they had been 'sent by their employer'. In one case-study where National Certificate modules were used, language modules were a compulsory component in the programmes of study for the students, although they had presumably taken this into account when choosing their programmes.

In the two case-studies which led to Higher National qualifications (Certificate or Diploma), approximately three-quarters (73% in each case) of the students stated that they had voluntarily chosen a language option. In those case-study courses which led to degree or postgraduate qualifications, similar proportions (79% and 80%) of students made it clear that they had been consciously looking for a way of combining their knowledge of language with a vocational qualification.

There is therefore a mixed picture of the ways in which these various groups came to be following these language courses, with the more highly qualified people apparently more driven by their existing linguistic knowledge and seeking for ways to put it to vocational use. For those with lower previous language qualifications it may be that the prime impulse is the vocational subject to which the language is a useful adjunct.

What level(s) are the students starting from?

In the sample as a whole sixty-five per cent of the students had some previous qualification in a foreign language, although the level of these qualifications varied widely from SCE 'O' Grade through to one student who had a postgraduate qualification. Within the case-studies there were differences in the entry level of the intake. In some instances, for example case-study C2 (the postgraduate course) there was an expectation that students would arrive with a well-developed proficiency in their main foreign language. In case-study B1, which consisted of SWAP Access students, seventy-one per cent of the students had no previous foreign language qualification of any kind. Elsewhere the proportions of students who responded to the questionnaire and who had no qualifications varied from thirty to fifty-five per cent. Table 3 presents a summary of students' entry level qualifications.

Table 3 *Level of students' previous qualification in the foreign language which they are currently studying*

	No qual	O/S/NS	H/A/ CSYS/HN	Degree /PG	Total No.
Case-study A1	9 100%	0	0	0	9
Case-study A2	12 67%	2 11%	4 22%	0	18
Case-study B1	16 89%	2 11%	0	0	18
Case-study B2	10 100%	0	0	0	10
Case-study B3	6 55%	4 36%	1 9%	0	11
Case-study B4	23 59%	10 26%	5 13%	1 3%	39
Case-study B5	No returns				
Case-study C1	1 11%	0	8 89%	0	9
Case-study C2	1 4%	0	1 4%	26 93%	28

To what level(s) do the students expect to take their foreign language learning?

The research team attempted to gain some insight into the aspirations of the students by asking them to rate themselves against sets of statements of 'typical' performance in the four language modes (listening, speaking, reading and writing) at five levels. Of necessity, these statements had to be brief 'thumbnail sketches' and the students' responses must therefore be interpreted with some caution. In addition, the statements were based on the statements of performance in the **draft** version of the Language Lead body's National Standards. These statements have since been revised.

As well as asking the students the level to which they thought they **ought** to be able to perform in each mode, we asked whether they thought that their current course was **good** at helping them to achieve this. In this way we hoped to be able to gain some insight into the ways that their current courses were meeting their aspirations. The actual statements we used to describe 'typical' performance in each mode at each level are included in Appendix A.

We also asked teaching staff what level students were expected to reach on completion of each of the case-study courses. As this was asked in interview, and most staff had some knowledge of the draft standards, we were able to go into slightly more detail about the levels of performance. Table 4 below presents the findings on staff's expectations, students' aspirations and students' views of the course for each of the case-studies.

***Table 4** Indication of expected 'levels' of attainment*

Case-study	Qualification	Staff expectation				Student aspiration				Student view of course			
		L	S	R	W	L	S	R	W	L	S	R	W
A1	National Certificate	1-2	1-2	1-2	1-2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
A2	No formal qualification	5	5	0	0	4	4	3	3	4	3	4	3
B1	National Certificate	2	2	2	2	4	3	3	3	2	2	2	3
B2	National Certificate	2	2	1	1	2	2	3	3	2	2	3	3
B3	Higher National	3	3	3	2-3	4	3	3	3	2	2	2	2
B4	Higher National	3	3	2	2	4	3	3	3	4	3	3	3
B5	No formal qualification	1	1	1	1	No info				No info			
C1*	Degree	4-5	3-5	3-5	3-5	5	5	5	5	3	3	4	4
C2	Postgraduate diploma	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	3

* Case-study C1 was the only instance in which there was no apparent consensus amongst the teaching staff about the level to which the course was aiming to take the students.
L = listening; S = speaking; R = reading; W = writing
'Levels' are derived from brief performance statements based on **draft** Languages Lead Body Standards and must therefore be treated with some caution. 1 = 'low', 5 = 'high'.

The pattern of levels of attainment associated with each course is, in general, as would be expected. The optional course for engineers (case-study B5) shows a staff expectation that students will learn to perform at Level One. Unfortunately there is no parallel information from students to allow comparisons. Thereafter we can see a general trend for staff expectations of National Certificate courses (case-studies A1, B1 and B2) to be around Level One or Two; Higher National courses (case-studies B3 and B4) to be around Level Two or Three; the degree course (case-study C1) to be higher than this; and the postgraduate course (case-study C2) to

be at Level Five. Case-study C1 was the only instance in which there was no apparent consensus amongst the teaching staff as to the Level at which they were aiming. As we shall see, this was mirrored elsewhere in some confusion about the purposes of language teaching on this course. It is also notable that case-study C1 revealed the greatest discrepancy between the students' aspirations and their expectations of what the course would teach them.

Case-study A2 shows apparently high staff expectations for students' performances in listening and speaking. In interview it became clear that this was a function of the highly specialised nature of the work in which these students were engaged and reflected more on their vocational than on their linguistic expertise. This point is discussed more fully on page 19. It is also interesting that the staff in this case-study emphasised their teaching of listening and speaking over reading and writing, although they did say in interview that they aimed to teach some reading. The students clearly aspired, and expected, to acquire similar mastery of these modes.

In most of the case-studies the students' aspirations and expectations were broadly in line with the expectations of the teaching staff, once allowance has been made for the fact that aspirations would tend, if anything, to be higher than expectations. The students in case-study B1 appear to have particularly high aspirations compared to those on other National Certificate courses, and compared to their own (and the teaching staff's) expectations of their own course. This may be at least partly explained by the fact that these were Access students who were intending to progress to higher education and so might reasonably hold higher long-term aspirations.

There tends not to be any sharp differentiation in either the staff or student responses regarding each of the four language modes. Insofar as any such differences are apparent, they tend to be in the direction of greater expectations of performance in listening and speaking, as opposed to writing and reading. This would be in line with current 'communicative' approaches to teaching.

THE TEACHING STAFF

Who are the teaching staff?

It turned out to be surprisingly difficult to get an accurate picture of the staff who were involved in the case-study courses. Even within the time of the field work for the project there were staff changes in several of the language sections concerned, or it was pointed out to us that changes were imminent. This is in itself indicative of the rapid changes occurring in further and higher education in general, and in foreign language teaching in particular. It is also a feature of a system which continues to rely heavily on the use of part-time members of staff, who were present in all the language sections we visited.

However, it was possible to classify the language sections which taught the case-study courses into two broad categories: those which had

a reasonable complement of full-time staff (five or more), plus varying numbers of part-time staff and language assistants; and the others which tended to have only one full-time member of staff (in one instance, soon to be two) and relied on part-time staff for much of their teaching. Case-studies A1, B1, B5, C1 and C2 fell into the first category; while case-studies A2, B2, B3 and B4 fell into the second. The possible effects of this reliance on part-time staff will be discussed in a later section.

In only two of the case-studies (A1 and C2) did staff make a point of the fact that, as well as their language expertise, they also had relevant background experience in the vocational areas which the students were studying (Tourism and Marketing respectively). In these case-studies the existence of this vocational expertise was either considered a desirable attribute for those who were to teach the course, or had been a factor in its development.

What are the aims of the staff in the case-study courses?

While the students tended to rate the vocational usefulness of a foreign language highly, it was not always their only, or even primary, purpose in learning a foreign language. Some teaching staff recognised this. In case-study B1 (the Access course) the immediate aim was as much to ensure the students' ability to progress to higher education as to prepare them for using languages in their work. This was admitted by staff:

> Some of them are wanting to go on to HE, and for that Module 3 is an entry requirement. (B1)

> My current access course ... they're fully stretched to do Module 3, but the motivation there is that if they do Module 3 by the time they go up to [HE institution]..to do the Diploma course ... that will exempt them from certain courses there and count towards the final diploma. (B1)

> Some of them may not use them much at all, other than as an entry requirement for HE ...I don't know whether any of these are particularly keen on languages, I ... would imagine that they're the kind of people who would want something which they would see as a more substantial subject which would get them in the job market more quickly. (B1)

This Access course was not the only one where teaching staff were prepared to admit that the demands of acquiring a qualification could colour their view of their task. One member of staff in case-study B3 was anxious to provide a safety net, in the form of a National Certificate module, for students who found the three credit Higher National unit too much of a challenge:

> My number one aim is to get as many people the qualification as I can. Beyond that it's to make sure that everyone gets as much out of the course as they can. If I realise that they're not going to achieve the entire unit over the session, I'll maybe try and get them a module out of it. (B3)

Elsewhere, particularly where the courses were being provided for beginners, ambitions also had to be limited. They were sometimes

expressed in terms of meeting the requirements of the awarding body or instilling some limited confidence in using the foreign language. Occasionally the vocational purpose of the language course appeared almost an afterthought:

> Obviously we want them to be successful in meeting the criteria ... I would like ... to see them moving to a situation where they felt confident, even if it was only up to a certain level ... in the sense that they were not afraid to go on and not afraid to use their language ... it is very orally and aurally oriented ... I'm not so concerned about how accurate their writing is ... at this level. (B4)

> I would hope that although it's only 120 hours..that by the end they'll not just be able to cope with going to Germany or France on holiday, they'll be able to cope with German or French in a working situation more realistically than they would have done if they'd followed a traditional textbook ... And I'd hope obviously that it'll be advantageous to them from the point of view of gaining a job. (B4)

All this raised questions about what exactly beginners should be able to do by the end of their language course. Teaching staff tended to be realistic about their expectations of beginners:

> I think just to give them ... you can only give them in that kind of time [60 hrs] a certain basic idea of the language. (B5)

> ... the initial aim would be to give them a basic skill ... I've got a whole list of basic skills which in my view people like that need ... then after about 20 or 30 hours I give them firm-specific terminology ... which they can deal with at a very early stage because they're highly motivated ... it's much more motivating really to talk about terminals rather than tomatoes ... [they] will deal with other software engineers [in Germany]. They seem to have a lot of problems with the material, and they're there to solve problems, therefore specifications are extremely important ... numbers are extremely important, point-five or a comma, I teach them that kind of thing immediately. (A2)

The second of the above quotations is from one of the two case-studies of customised provision for a specific firm or industry. It raises an interesting distinction between these customised courses and most of the other beginners' courses studied in the project: the staff in the customised courses said that they tended to home in on particular vocabulary or language forms appropriate to their client group at a much earlier stage than the teaching staff in the other colleges would claim to do. In both of these case-studies the actual material to be learned by the students was decided after a needs analysis of the client group:

> ... I ask if I can come down and do a needs analysis ... I have a form which I ask if I can fill in while I speak to them. Very often the first time I go there it's really just more of a chat ... and very often I go a second time, and that's really when it's much more targeted and I ask to see the people who might participate ... and I find out what they perceive they need, because very often the training manager's idea of what they need is completely different from what the course participants think they need ... it's difficult to strike a balance. I have to write up a proposal, and in the end it's the training manager who decides whether I get the money ... (A2)

> ..as far as topics go, I go by my needs analysis ... if they say they just want sales talk or basic social skills, then I do precisely that ... (A2)

> [Employees in the box office at XXX ... for example] ... need to be able to count very fast in 10 languages. That would be more useful than their being absolutely proficient in one language ... Someone working in an office, dealing with phone messages, correspondence etc, needs different skills from someone working at a reception desk at a hotel or at an information office. You take your people and teach them what they need to know. (A1)

> I think they should go even further, rather than having a general Japanese course, you ought to have a separate hotel Japanese course, or restaurant course, so that you can deal with each area individually. (A1)

In other case-studies the view tended to be expressed that, at the stage of teaching complete beginners, it was only 'general' language skills which were appropriate, and only later could vocationally-specific topics be introduced:

> I don't really believe too much in the specialist thing in the early stages anyway because I think that unless you've got a good grounding in the language ... (B5)

> At the lower levels I don't think it's a distinction at all really. (B5)

> Once they've done about 60 hours, yes, you can start to integrate, certainly in a fairly generalistic way, a kind of industrial area ... not necessarily specifically tied down to a particular field of operation ... Before that, you have to establish certain grammatical patterns ... (B5)

> You don't have much latitude to play [in a vocationally-oriented course] ... in a general beginners' course there are more possibilities to do ... a few more fun things, which I feel is essential in a beginners' course. (C1)

Even when some degree of vocational specificity began to be introduced, this still tended not to be as precisely focused as it was in the customised courses:

> It's not specific for surveyors ... it is a generalist course ... it's to give them a foundation in mainly listening and speaking in everyday situations, extending ... if they stick with it long enough, to some professional situations ... not highly specific areas of their operation, but basic communication within an industrial company ....The themes are fairly simplistic ... like meeting, introducing yourself, food and drink ... (B5)

> You tend to try and avoid leisure topics, though ... you really have to do those anyway to get some of the basics across. (B4)

> With the vocationally-oriented course I think we've always got it in mind that we're trying to make this relevant to them ... I think that's what gives it the interest. (B4)

> ... with the [degree course] the emphasis is on business, ... but..there is a certain amount of emphasis on survival skills as well. (C1)

Part of the reason for the high degree of vocational specificity in the customised courses is due to a perception that employers see more general

courses as 'social chit-chat', though some of the teaching staff also saw some more intrinsic interest in the more vocationally-specific approach:

> I would think that all my courses in industry are vocational, ... most firms do not want just social chit-chat, they're very happy to have me take away company literature and work with it and integrate it into their programme.... that interests me a lot more than giving them the run of the mill social stuff. (A2)

There is, of course, no absolute dichotomy between 'general' courses, containing what was described above as 'social chit-chat', and vocationally-oriented courses. In many professional contexts the ability to engage in social exchanges in the foreign language is clearly just as important as being able to deal with highly technical vocabulary.

The participants in case-study A2, however, were not involved in negotiating processes which would have benefited greatly from their ability to converse socially in the foreign language. Their role was primarily to solve technical problems and their main need was for suitable technical language.

The distinction between 'vocational' and 'general' language may be as much to do with level as substance: there is a 'functional' level of language ability below that of the specialist 'university linguist' for which there is a place in industry:

> A university linguist expects a reasonably good salary, whereas business wants to pay people who can operate a telephone, which is basically a clerical grade. But they'll not get that because they're not doing vocational languages properly ... I think there's a missing step that I think in schools and colleges we haven't quite got over yet. We haven't quite got into language training ... you can't in some ways because you don't know where you're going to end up. In the tourist course we've got a fair idea, but we've still got to be pretty open. The employers like them to be functional and operational, and we can't provide that yet because we don't know what job they're going to go into. (A1)

> ... to give students a basis in business language which will equip them to go out into offices ... and be able to cope with 'phone calls, reception situations, mail and to be able to write simple letters ... They don't have to deal with anything that's to do with specific technological vocabulary ... we've got to make it a broad course ... I think if they've got an HN they're not going to be the people who're initiating the business contact ... They'd presumably go on and do some other work. I know ... there are students who're trying to apply [to HE institution] for Business with Language..they would see that as being the next step on. (B4)

> ... they should have gained the confidence to communicate in the business environment and socially ... with ease, but not fluently ... (C1)

Most of the courses in the project would see themselves as preparing linguists to undertake these 'middle-ranking' tasks. The exceptions were possibly case-study B1 (the Access course where much of the emphasis was on preparation for HE) and case-study C2 (the postgraduate course). Case-study C1 (vocational degree with languages) presented a somewhat

mixed view of its aims which will be further discussed below.

Another possible exception was encountered in one of the 'customised' courses (case-study A2) where it was brought home to us that there was a distinction to be made between the learners' degree of linguistic expertise and the vocational expertise which they had already acquired. It was pointed out that, by the definitions which we were using, these learners could be said to be performing at Level 5 of the Lead Body draft standards:

> I would say that after 40 hours they ought to be able to deal with highly specialised information by listening ... and spoken ... It sounds as if this is the highest level here, but to them it's not that difficult ... it's the kind of terminology they deal with all the time, and besides, the stuff they get over from Germany ... you must have seen computer texts ... the only thing that is German are the grammatical structures and the conjunctions ... the nouns and the adjectives are all English anyway ... I would not say that that's the highest possible level for them, it is perhaps for us. (A2)

> ... that doesn't mean to say that they can speak fluent German ... they can understand and they can deal with highly specialised tasks as well, but their German is by no means perfect. (A2)

The staff who taught the other customised course (case-study A1) agreed that the level of linguistic expertise they were aiming to impart was not high:

> A lot of it is very basic. At that level you're still teaching them social language. It's not vocational in a sense. What these people need is basic social communicative skills in the language. You can adapt them to their specific work. (A1)

The staff in case-studies A1 and A2 clearly saw the degree of vocational specificity which they were able to bring to their teaching as highly desirable and appropriate for the task which they had to face. In another case-study, the same point about vocational specialism not implying linguistic expertise was made, but with much less sympathy for the 'task-centred' vocationally-specific approach:

> ... saying something is specialised, or highly specialised, it's quite difficult to pinpoint that ... we're teaching skills ... they will know how to access that information, how to go about acquiring the necessary vocabulary ... it's more a case of developing skills, you're trying to introduce more specificity all the time, although that doesn't mean to say that at the end the skills won't be transferable ... You could train a skiing instructor in a relatively short period of time, you could train them to be very competent to teach skiing in the foreign language, but that doesn't mean to say that they could go in and order a meal with a great deal of success ... which would count as a routine daily task.(C1)

> Specialised words are usually very easy anyway, that's not the problem, it's the skill. (C1)

Case-study C1 was interesting in that it was the only case-study in which there was no overall agreement amongst the staff interviewed about the level to which they intended that their students should acquire their foreign language. There was similar uncertainty about the aims of the language teaching within the department. This was largely because the

students spent the third year of their degree course studying abroad and there was felt to be a tension between vocationally-specific teaching and providing the students with the skills required for survival in a foreign academic environment:

> With [this course] I feel that ..we haven't resolved whether we're teaching languages for vocational purposes or academic purposes, it's this business of them going away to a foreign university in third year, we're having to juggle two different sets of aims. (C1)

There was also a view expressed which was much more in accord with the traditional notion of language teaching at university level than with the usually accepted aims of vocational education:

> ... to enable them to succeed ... to get away from this idea of Europe and us ... that they really are culturally aware ... I'm trying to avoid this idea of creating good little Europeans, I'd like them to be critical Europeans as well ... that whatever they do they'll continue to learn, that the strategies we give them will stay with them. (C1)

The course in case-study C1 was a relatively recent development, and it may be that these uncertainties on the part of the staff will resolve themselves as experience is gained. The suggestion of reservations about the aims of vocational language learning evident in case-study C1 was also expressed by one respondent in case-study C2 (the postgraduate course):

> I do find it rather narrow, this approach [teaching for vocational purposes]. I would like to - and I do certainly, give them a wider cultural background. It's what you teach, rather than the way you teach. - You can adapt modern communicative methods to this type of language for specific purposes. (C2).

It may not be possible to draw firm conclusions from the views expressed by the staff in these case-studies, but there do appear to be two schools of thought about the initial approach to language teaching for vocational purposes: one which is highly functional and vocationally specific; and another which is 'generalist'. There are echoes in this of the 'training versus education' debate. One side promotes the virtues of vocational relevance as a motivating factor and sees the purpose of the exercise as 'getting the task done'; the other sees greater opportunities for varied and interesting teaching in non-specific courses and promotes general 'transferable skills' leading to an adaptable and flexible learner.

It may be that these are two roads to the same destination and that the choice of direction to take should ultimately depend on the needs and circumstances of the learner. What does seem to be clear is that there needs to be some awareness of **what** is to be taught and **why** it is being taught on the part of those doing the teaching (and, presumably, on the part of those being taught).

It would seem unlikely that the degree of vocational specificity which we found in the customised courses would be possible in all other courses. For one thing the students on those courses would not be likely to end up in the same employment - their ultimate needs may well differ considerably.

Nor would these students be motivated by the same immediate vocational relevance of the language to their everyday life which was apparent amongst those in employment who were attending the customised courses. Nevertheless, the students in these case-studies clearly indicated that vocational purposes were important to them in their language learning. Therefore, it is perhaps the case that some of the more 'generalist' courses are missing the opportunity to build upon an important motivating influence.

At the same time, it seems questionable if the very narrow 'language training' approach is sufficient if it does not also equip the learners to cope with unfamiliar situations and to continue learning once the support of the teacher is no longer available.

One other tentative conclusion which we might draw is that, in discussing the use of foreign languages in vocational settings, it is important to distinguish the level of linguistic expertise needed from the level of vocational subject expertise. It was pointed out to us that much highly specialised and technical vocabulary might be required by learners, but that it may be used in relatively basic grammatical structures. In some cases, as in case-study A2, this technical vocabulary will be international in character and may present few problems.

INSTITUTIONAL FACTORS IN COURSE PROVISION

Problems in getting started

As we saw in Chapter One, the institutions in which the case-studies were conducted had varying histories of language provision. In several case-studies staff told us about the problems associated with setting up new courses, and it was apparent that these could be heightened when it was also a new department which was being set up. Case-study C1 was in such a relatively new department. In this institution there was no previous history of language teaching and the department had started with one full-time member of staff, assisted by part-time staff. This had caused some problems in integrating the staff into a coherent group:

> ...when we started out I was teaching with a group of part-time staff, and you know the problems part-time staff face when trying to integrate into a department ... there were no staff to guide them through. (C1)

Since then development and expansion of language teaching in the institution had been rapid, but there had been little sign of the pressures on the staff reducing:

> Three new members of staff joined us a year and a half ago, with great enthusiasm and great experience, and I think they have been somewhat disillusioned by the pressure on them...and they cannot always produce materials that they would like to, simply because of time...and that's said of staff who are usually coming in at eight and not leaving till six. (C1)

Part of the problem was identified by the course leader as being to do with resources, which tended to follow students. This meant that until such time as courses were running and attracting students, the resources available for development work were limited, and there was a heavy reliance on the good will and efforts of the staff:

> ... but there are no extra staff to do the development until the course is developed, then students go on the course, they attract FTEs and we get our percentage...the development stage is a very difficult one ... (C1)

The issue of the availability (or non-availability) of development time was not, however, restricted to case-study C1. Elsewhere it was also apparent that it was sometimes necessary to rely on teaching staff being willing to undertake this work in their own time:

> I've never had development time ... if you're on a full timetable, you teach twenty-one or twenty-two hours...so there isn't much time, all you can do is the preparation. All of the assessments that I've developed, all of the development work I've done has had to be done in my own time at home, which is a bit of a sore point. (B4)

> ... these packages ... I told you about, we had one or two meetings and basically we wrote them in three months flat...we didn't get any development time ... with part-timers, basically they did it in their own time, they didn't get paid for it ... We wrote it in three months ... (A2)

In one case-study the immediate response to a question about development time being made available for new courses was loud laughter. Finding time was almost universally thought to be a problem. However, some institutions appeared to be more supportive than others:

> Development time is allowed as much as possible, but sometimes the dictates of the timetable don't allow us to give as much as we'd like to give ... Normally for a HN Unit people would be given one block of perhaps three hours a week to develop material for that unit. They wouldn't be expected to teach it from scratch without some development time. (B3)

It should also be noted that the development pressures being felt by some languages departments were sometimes the result of the servicing role they had for other departments and could be caused by unrealistic expectations on the part of their colleagues in those departments:

> I've had contact with a wide range of colleagues within the [institution] who've wanted to develop courses...the experience has been a very depressing one...there ...[are some] who ring you up and say "we need a language option, can you slot it in...the validation is in a week" ...that kind of approach.. (C1)

The relationship between language departments and vocational subject departments is explored elsewhere in this report. However it is worth noting here that language teaching staff sometimes felt that staff in other departments did not fully understand either what was possible in language teaching or what was desirable. This could be expressed as a perceived lack of priority being given to foreign language teaching:

> ...it has only gradually come on board, partly because the other vocational class areas...did not perceive the need, or even if they acknowledged that there was a desirability, they didn't think that anything that was already on the course programme was worthy of being pushed off in order to accommodate a language...(B4)

Sometimes it was implied that staff in other departments did not understand the nature of foreign language learning and that this could lead to inappropriate timetabling. In case-study B5, for example, the teaching staff were of the view that the best way to timetable foreign language teaching was to have relatively short classes spread out over a fairly long period of time, and not short intensive courses which were then dropped by the students. In this institution they had their own way of demonstrating to staff the nature of language learning. What they wanted, according to the course leader, was:

> Co-operation on the part of course organisers...things like timetabling. Acceptance also by people outwith languages that languages aren't something you pick up for a few terms and then just drop...We're gradually converting a lot of the staff, because we've been offering classes to staff and that has opened their eyes wonderfully that you don't pick up a language in a couple of weeks. (B5)

The languages department in case-study C1 was also offering language teaching to staff in other departments and reported similar progress in enhancing the awareness and understanding of their colleagues. The course leader there reported of this exercise in staff development that:

> ...it helps lecturers to appreciate the problems faced by their students...it allows...course designers to estimate realistically what can be achieved. (C1)

The department in case-study C1 was also attempting to get around the problem of languages being squeezed out of the timetables of courses by offering foreign languages as open learning options which students could study in their own time. This not only made the language teaching available to the students, but could also lead to the demand for languages being made more apparent to the vocational subject departments:

> When there is no formal provision for languages in their course, and students feel they want to take their languages forward, then they have the opportunity to access [open learning options] depending on their own commitments. (C1)

> ...those students who've been exposed to [open learning options] usually then go to their course leaders and say "why don't we have a language element in the course anyway, why's it not built-in?" (C1)

Facilities

Not all of the case-study departments had a permanent base from which to operate, and even in some of those colleges where there was an established 'languages suite', part-time members of staff were still 'peripatetic'. The importance of a permanent base for the languages staff was particularly apparent in case-study B4 where the department had just acquired one:

> I think having our own language rooms is essential, because last year we were peripatetic...it was just hopeless...It's been really really wonderful having our own rooms and having a resource-base where you can just go in and pick things up...I think it's important too to have good access to tape machines... (B4)

Elsewhere access to various foreign language teaching resources was very variable. Four of the case-studies had no access to any form of information technology or sophisticated audio equipment (other than portable tape-recorders). Two case-study institutions had highly developed information technology, video and computer-assisted language learning (CALL) facilities, although in one of these the facilities were not used with the case-study course; and one other institution was in the process of developing CALL facilities. It was recognised that modern equipment could help to relieve some of the pressure on teachers:

> We don't have brilliant facilities. We've been asking for a PALE [perimeter audio listening equipment] system for long enough ... The old language labs were removed a couple of years ago. They were no longer functional anyway, they required too much in the way of maintenance and they weren't prepared to provide us with a technician...I really feel that the students are being hard done by. It also puts more pressure on the teacher to get round the groups as fast as possible. (B3)

Even where facilities existed it was not always possible for them to be used with all classes. Sometimes this could be because of lack of sufficient equipment for everyone to use, in other cases it was another timetabling problem. In case-study B5 both problems were evident. Once again it seemed to be part-time staff who suffered most from this:

> We're not all doing it with all our classes because there was a transition point where they're weren't enough MAC labs ... (B5)

> We've got portable tape-recorders that our part-timers use, because they don't very often have the privilege of being in the lab because of the timing. (B5)

However, case-study B5 was in the process of developing computer packages for use with the students. These were regarded as useful supplementary resources which would be in addition to the normal teaching and could be used by students in their own time:

> Hypercard...I've produced various stacks...it gives the students basic information about what energy sources are available, it gives them basic vocabulary...and it also has exercises, a vocabulary exercise and a cloze passage...I've got another one on Spanish politics and a business case-study...which contains sound...this one has a 'phone call, for example. These things I have available for the students, they use them in their own time... (B5)

Elsewhere, case-study C2 was an example of an institution which was reasonably well equipped with technological resources. It had built up an extensive collection of audio and visual material over time, much of which was produced in-house by the department. As yet there was relatively little in the way of computer-assisted language learning, but one member of staff had a particular interest in this area and was planning to develop it further:

> There is a lot of video material there. Really, the problem is that there is not enough time to do it all. There is a tape library, there is a video library that they can use...magazines, newspapers...they have got access to that. (C2)

> We try to use multi-media applications because we believe that language learning is a very ... multi-sensory activity so we shouldn't just rely on the spoken form and the written word, it should rely on all kinds of things. So we vary the teaching. ... There are not as many opportunities in the department for self-study as I'd like to see. But I will develop them, because my field is computer-assisted language learning, so I'm particularly interested in things like that. (C2)

As these quotations make clear, these technological resources tended to be regarded as additions to, rather than replacements for, the normal teaching in the department. They served to expand the variety of language exposure of the students, and allowed for increased independent study. However, not all case-study institutions had members of staff who were sufficiently expert in the technology to produce these materials for themselves. While the benefits of such resources for independent study were recognised, there was a feeling expressed elsewhere that the educational content of some of the commercially available computer material may not be adequate:

> ... and if we could get them in there [computing rooms] I'm not sure what relevant programmes are available, the last time I had a look at them I was not too impressed, it's probably advanced since then. And it is something they could work by themselves on... (B1)

This note of caution about computer packages is probably realistic. There have been many claims made for computer-assisted learning over the years and, as yet, few have been realised. Elsewhere we report some dissatisfaction amongst staff about the suitability of commercially available textbooks. It is more than probable that the same criticisms could be levelled at even the best commercially available computer software. At the current stage of development it is probably best to leave the construction of such packages to those with sufficient enthusiasm and expertise to tailor them to the needs of their particular students.

One other resource which is of considerable importance to languages departments is the availability of native speakers, usually in the form of foreign language assistants. All of the case-study courses in higher education institutions (B5, C1 and C2) had foreign language assistants working with the students, but the situation in further education colleges was much more variable. One further education languages department (case-study B1) was particularly well supplied with foreign languages assistants, and in another (A2) the course organiser was a native speaker of the target language. In at least one case a part-time native speaker who had been involved with the course was no longer available and in another there were hopes that the college would be able to find funding for a foreign language assistant in the future. These case-studies tend to suggest, however, that further education colleges are not yet well supplied with foreign languages assistants. Given the emphasis being placed upon communicative language learning, it would seem that wider access to

native speakers of the target foreign language could only be of benefit to students in these institutions.

Part-time teaching staff

Several references have been made to problems which affect part-time members of staff in these language departments. Part-time staff are much less likely to be given development time for either helping to design and construct a course or writing the teaching and assessment materials for delivering it. Much could, therefore, depend on their voluntary efforts.

Similarly part-time staff were also likely to find it much more difficult to attend departmental meetings, in-service courses, or just to have time to consult their colleagues in the department. The potential deleterious effect on departmental coherence and shared understanding of aims and purpose was occasionally mentioned to us, and is heightened when the majority of staff in any department are part-timers.

It also remained the case that it was part-time staff who were least likely to have access to a permanent base from which to work and were least likely to have the use of language laboratories and audio or video equipment, even where these were otherwise in good supply.

As we shall also see in Chapter Four, we encountered at least one instance where the demands on staff time of continuous assessment could not be met because of the high proportion of part-time staff involved. This led to a reversion to a greater emphasis on the use of examinations than the teaching staff would have liked.

What is not clear to us is the extent to which these problems are caused solely by the fact that these members of staff are part-time, or whether they are compounded by the tendency for part-time staff to have only temporary contracts. We have no evidence to suggest that part-time staff with permanent contracts face fewer problems, but this must remain an open question.

It is likely that many institutions will continue to rely on part-time teaching staff, but it should be recognised that this raises issues which managers of institutions and organisers of courses would do well to address.

3 Foreign language teaching

Teaching approaches are to some extent dictated by extraneous factors, such as timetabling, staffing policy, the allocation of resources or the degree of integration with vocational subjects. Nevertheless, it is possible to build up a picture of how students and staff describe the teaching approaches used in the case-study courses. The data in this section are drawn from the questionnaire responses of 142 students in the case-studies and from in-depth interviews with twenty-seven members of staff involved in teaching, developing or managing the case-study courses.

As one might expect, given that our case-studies were selected to give a flavour of the full range of vocationally-oriented language courses on offer, there are salient differences in teaching approaches. There is, however, a unifying strand linking all the case-study courses: a commitment to what is broadly termed the 'communicative' approach. This may be characterised as placing an increased emphasis on the actual use of the language, especially the spoken language, and approaching the study of the language through the various functions which language is used to perform, such as asking questions, giving or receiving information, or making introductions. It starts from the **meaning** and **use** of the language and derives study of form and structure from actual examples of language use. It also makes much use of the idea of using language creatively to bridge an information gap. These features contrast it to more 'traditional' approaches which often began with study of form and structure, and which could encourage rote learning of conversational formulae and, as a result, could sometimes be accused of neglecting the communication of meaning and the actual creative use of the language.

WHAT IS HAPPENING: THE QUESTIONNAIRE DATA

What approaches do the students say that they prefer?

Table 5 shows the responses of the student sample (in all the case-studies where we obtained information from the students) to a question which asked them to identify those teaching methods which they found particularly helpful.

There were remarkably few statistically significant differences between groups of students in their responses to this set of questions. No differences were apparent on the basis of age, sex, previous language qualifications or language being studied. Only four of the items showed statistically significant differences between case-studies, and these will be discussed separately below.

The items on which there are no statistically significant differences between case-studies show a fairly clear pattern. Clear majorities of all students find those teaching approaches which involve 'speaking practice' (with either the teacher or another student) to be 'very helpful', and there is also a majority who find 'role play or simulation exercises' to be 'very helpful', with almost the same proportion of students finding them to be 'fairly helpful'. Students tend to be slightly less enthusiastic, but are still positive, about 'listening exercises', 'grammar exercises' and 'working closely from a textbook'.

Table 5 *Students' views on the 'helpfulness of various teaching methods'*

	Very helpful	Fairly helpful	Not very helpful	I have never done this
1. Working closely from a textbook N=142	23%	68%	8%	2%
*2. Working through materials produced by the teacher N=142	37%	61%	2%	1%
3. Doing grammar exercises N=140	24%	61%	14%	1%
4. Producing written material in the foreign language with groups of other students N=137	20%	50%	13%	17%
*5. Having discussions in the foreign language with groups of other students N=140	48%	39%	6%	7%
6. Doing role play or simulation exercises in the foreign language in class N=141	43%	40%	9%	8%
7. Doing speaking practice in the foreign language in a pair with another student N=141	60%	36%	4%	1%
8. Doing speaking practice in the foreign language with the teacher N=142	73%	23%	3%	1%
9. Doing listening exercises in the foreign language with the teacher N=142	33%	59%	7%	1%
10. Working with one other student to assess one another's abilities N=141	14%	36%	25%	25%
*11. Using a computer learning package, interactive video or other form of interactive technology N=141	7%	14%	10%	69%
*12. Working in a language laboratory N=139	22%	37%	10%	30%
13. Working alone with a self-study package N=140	6%	29%	29%	36%

* = a statistically signficant difference exists between case-studies ($p < 0.01$) Figures are percentages rounded to the nearest one per cent.

Students also find approaches which encourage them to work together to assess one another's abilities, or to work alone with self-study packages, fairly helpful. However, not all students have experience of these methods, and they tended not to be categorised as 'very helpful' by the students.

These findings may not be unexpected, but the strong endorsement from students at all levels, and with all types of background and aspiration, of teaching methods which are interactive and make direct use of the spoken language is an encouragement to those teachers who are adopting a communicative approach to language teaching.

In some of the other items relating to teaching methods there are statistically significant differences between case-studies. Students' views on the helpfulness of materials produced by the teacher were significantly more positive in the two case-studies of customised provision for specific industries (case-studies A1 and A2), and less positive in case-studies B4, C1 and C2. It would appear that the work which was put in by staff in the customised provision case-studies to conduct needs analysis and tailor their teaching to suit the needs of their students has found an echo in the students' appreciation of the resulting materials.

In two of the case-studies where students were less positive about teacher-produced materials (case-studies B4 and C1), the staff said that they tended to rely on commercially produced textbooks for their teaching. The third of the 'less positive' case-studies was the postgraduate course (C2) in which students are encouraged, and expected, to work independently for much of the time.

Differences were also apparent in the extent to which students found 'discussions in the foreign language with groups of other students' to be helpful. Students in case-studies A2, C1 and C2 were more inclined to be positive about this, while those in case-studies B1 and B3 were most negative. Students in case-studies C1 and C2 were the most linguistically qualified groups, while those in both case-studies B1 and B3 tended to be beginners with little previous language experience. The hypothesis must be that this form of group discussion is likely to be more satisfactory with groups of relatively experienced, and therefore confident, linguists than it is with relative beginners.

Other items in which there were differences between case-studies involved the use of language laboratories and computers (and other interactive technology). The differences here appeared to be based on the fact that only a few of the case-study colleges had such equipment available for their students.

Use of teaching methods in the case-studies: how do staff and student perceptions compare?

Table 6 shows both the students' and the staffs' views of the extent to which various teaching methods are used in each case-study course.

Table 6 *Student and staff views on the extent to which various teaching methods are used in case-studies*

		A1	A2	B1	B2	B3	B4	B5	C1	C2
1. Working closely from a textbook	students	√		√√	√√	√√	√√	n/a	√√	√
	staff			**	**	**	**	**	**	
2. Working through materials produced by the teacher	students	√√	√√	√	√√	√√	√	n/a	√√	√√
	staff	**	**	*	**	*	*	**	**	*
3. Doing grammar exercises	students		√	√	√	√	√	n/a	√	
	staff			*		**	*	**	*	
4. Producing written material in the foreign language with groups of other students	students					√	√	n/a		
	staff								*	*
5. Having discussions in the foreign language with groups of other students	students	√	√	√	√	√	√	n/a	√	√
	staff		**	*	*	*			**	*
6. Doing role play or simulation exercises in the foreign language in class	students	√	√	√	√	√√	√	n/a	√√	√√
	staff	**	**	**	**	*	**	**	**	*
7. Doing speaking practice in the foreign language in a pair with another student	students	√	√√	√√	√√	√	√	n/a	√√	√
	staff	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	*
8. Doing speaking practice in the foreign language with the teacher	students	√	√√	√√	√	√	√	n/a		√
	staff	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	*
9. Doing listening exercises in the foreign language with the teacher	students	√	√	√	√	√	√	n/a	√	√√
	staff	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	
10. Working with one other student to assess one another's abilities	students	√						n/a		
	staff	**								
11. Using a computer learning package, interactive video or other form of interactive technology	students							n/a		
	staff									
12. Working in a language laboratory	students							n/a	√	√√
	staff									
13. Working alone with a self-study package	students	√√						n/a		
	staff	**		*						

√√ = The category into which the **median** of the student responses fits is 'Do this a lot'
√ = The category into which the **median** of the student responses fits is 'Do some of this'
Blank cells = The category into which the median of the student responses fits is either 'Seldom do this' or 'Never do this'. No student information was obtained from case-study B5.
** = The majority of staff in the case-study say that they 'Do this a lot'.
* = The majority of staff in the case-study say that they 'Do some of this'.
Blank cells = The majority of staff in the case-study say that they either 'Seldom do this' or 'Never do this'.
(Staff numbers in each case-study tended to be very small, and in most cases these responses represent the consensus view of all staff).

Allowing for slight differences in perception (or interpretation) between staff and students as to whether they do certain things 'a lot' or only do 'some', then there is reasonable agreement between staff and students about the methods in use. In the majority of cases staff and student ratings of the amount of use of the listed teaching methods agree with one another, and there are very few instances where they differ by more than one point on the four-point scale which staff and students were asked to use in their estimates.

Table 6 appears to indicate that there is a widespread use of communicative teaching methods. Speaking practice with both the teacher and other students, listening exercises and role plays or simulations are almost universal features of these case-study courses. There is a clear divergence of opinion in case-study C2, where staff reported relative non-use of 'listening exercises', and students more frequent use of this technique. This difference may be accounted for by the fact that staff were primarily referring to **formalised** listening exercises. The students, on the other hand, may have interpreted the extensive use of the target language in classes as a 'listening exercise'.

Elsewhere in Table 6 we can see that while the case-study courses varied in the extent to which they made use of textbooks, they all relied to some extent on materials produced by the teaching staff. Case-studies also appeared to vary in the degree to which they placed an emphasis on the teaching of grammar. With one exception, there was little use made of peer assessment or self-study packages and there was very little evidence of teaching using language laboratories, computer learning packages or other interactive technology. Some of these differences will be explored more fully in the next section, which draws on the information provided by the teaching staff in interview.

REFLECTING ON TEACHING: THE INTERVIEW DATA

During interview, staff were asked to indicate the extent to which they used particular teaching methods. Their responses were detailed in Table 6.

As Table 6 clearly shows, the common denominator in all the case-study courses is an emphasis on approaches designed to enhance students' speaking and listening skills. The prevalence of these approaches is confirmed by the data from the students on their perception of the extent to which these methods were used.

The range of teaching approaches adopted is in part dictated by the entry level of the students and the objectives of the course. Given that our case-studies cover a range of entry and exit levels, it is not surprising that there are differences in teaching methods across the board. For convenience we will look at the case-studies in the three groups in which they were categorised in section 1:

- customised language training for those employed in particular vocational areas (case-studies A1 and A2);
- language options in vocationally-oriented National Certificate or Higher National courses, primarily aimed at students with few (or no) previous language qualifications (case-studies B1, B2, B3 and B4). We also include case-study B5 in this group. Although it forms part of a degree course, it is a voluntary language option for beginners and is not aiming for degree-level language attainment;
- vocationally-oriented courses in which the language is a major element. The students following these courses are language specialists working towards degree or postgraduate qualifications (case-studies C1 and C2).

In the following sections, we shall look at each of these three groups in turn and highlight the similarities and differences in respect of staff's views of teaching methods.

Teaching methods in customised language courses

In case-studies A1 and A2, the teaching approach was more 'task-based' and function-specific than in many other courses. The designers of both courses had undertaken a needs analysis of their client groups, and this had a large effect on the content of their teaching. In case-study A1, the emphasis was placed on using the spoken language in a highly-restricted context, with very specific sets of vocabulary and a limited range of language functions:

> Rather than teaching them "where is ... ?" with a variety of things tacked on, it's better to teach them "where is the toilet?" (A1)

> You can predict quite carefully ... we did testing for XXX airport, for their information desk staff. They use [the language] on the basis of "the bus is there", "the bank is there", opening times ... They hardly ever have a conversation. It is essentially formulaic. (A1)

> Task-based learning is ideal for languages because you want to go in and do something and get a response ... (A1)

The language being taught in case-study A1 was Japanese. The particular needs of the learners meant that it was the most formal register of Japanese which they were learning. Although this would normally only be taught at a more advanced level, it was the appropriate form of the language for these employees in the tourist industry to learn.

The delivery of the course was through a form of open learning which the teacher preferred to call 'supported self-study'. One of the interesting features of this was the encouragement of a system of peer support amongst the students. This had previously been used on a similar Spanish course which provided the model for the Japanese course.

There are obvious problems in attempting to devise any open learning system for the teaching of foreign languages, and these were recognised by the staff:

> I felt myself when I was asked to write an open learning course that I couldn't write an open learning course for languages and in particular for beginners ... in particular this type of course which is meant to be communicative. So we called it supported self-study ... because I don't believe that you can learn a language by yourself ... people start very enthusiastically, but I believe that something like seventy-five per cent of them drop out ... [through] lack of motivation. And also how can you communicate with a tape? You can't, you need quite a bit more tutor support than you would normally in an open learning course. (A1)

Since the students had only one and a half to two hours per week contact time with their tutor additional support was required. This came in the form of the 'partner' system whereby students were paired together and expected to practise their language skills outside of normal class contact time. The deviser of the Spanish course, where this idea had been developed, explained how it worked:

> That's worked very well. It's helped people not to feel lonely or isolated ... and also the fact that your partner 'phones you up ... means that you pick up the course again. It's developed into a kind of friendship ... they phone each other up in Spanish, they make arrangements in Spanish, they send each other faxes and postcards. (A1)

The Japanese course had only started at the beginning of the session in which the field work was carried out, but a similar peer support system was being adopted with no reported problems. This case-study was the only example we looked at of this kind of self-study package being an integral part of the course provision. The staff's views of its success appeared to be supported by the responses to the student questionnaire. All the student respondents from this case-study reported that they found the use of a self-study package to be either 'very helpful' or 'fairly helpful'. This was in contrast to the responses from students in all other case-studies.

The students in case-study A2 had no formalised support comparable to the 'partner' system in case-study A1. However, since many of them worked together in the same company, and their work involved them in using the foreign language (German in this case) regularly, they did not face the same potential problems of isolation and lack of opportunities to practise. As with the students in case-study A1, the amount of contact time with the teacher was limited and liable to suffer from discontinuities:

> I'm lucky if I've got the whole group there ... I always leave the package for those who can't come and ask the others to discuss it with them ... and they usually do ... It's simply because they can see immediate relevance, because next week they're going there and they have to deal with precisely the situations I'm giving them. (A2)

All teaching was firmly focused on the needs of the learners and made extensive use of materials provided by the company concerned. Because the students' work involved them in visits to Germany, relevant topics for oral practice were not hard to come by:

> ... if somebody has gone [to Germany] I would leave half an hour for feedback in the next lesson. (A2)

It is interesting to contrast the two customised provision case-studies as far as staff's attitude to the teaching of grammar is concerned. In case-study A1 there was no explicit teaching of grammar. On the other hand, the course manager and teacher in case-study A2 was a firm believer in the value of explicit grammar teaching:

> I have very firm views about teaching specific points of grammar early on and thereafter I just jump from topic to topic and integrate it wherever ... most of my students don't want writing skills, they want speaking skills, so it's just all oral, it's group work, it's talking with me or with each other ... they get as much practice as possible ... but when it comes to grammar teaching, which I insist on, I actually strangely enough do that in English, because it takes less time, it costs the company less money ... (A2)

If there were problems in this case-study they were not associated with the students or the teaching, but with unrealistic expectations on the part of the client companies:

> I have to dissuade them [training managers] from putting on too much, in terms of hours ... very often they say "we need to learn this very fast, at least three hours a week ..." I always dissuade them because people like that never have time ... they only have time for an hour and a half a week, and they perhaps don't even have time to revise in the middle ... Equally, and I'm very very strict about this just now because it's caused me no end of problems in the past, they will ... put people of disparate abilities into the same group ... almost beginners and intermediate ... you have to be extremely careful there. (A2)

In another reported instance an employer had expected a student to deal with a situation which demanded fluent conversational skills after the student had received a short (twenty-hour) course in telephone skills.

Teaching methods in National Certificate, Higher National and non-specialist courses

The picture is more diffuse in case-studies B1, B2, B3, B4 and B5. The majority of students in this group of case-studies have no previous language qualifications, although a minority in each case-study did have an SCE 'O' or 'S' Grade in the language they were studying. In order to make a language option viable, students from several different vocational courses were sometimes grouped together for the foreign language component of their course. These two factors influence the degree of specialisation possible and in part determine the teaching methodology.

In general, staff in these case-study courses adopted mixed approaches (sometimes partly dictated by the necessity of coping with a three-hour teaching block). They relied fairly heavily on course books, supplementing them with material produced within the department, and felt the need for some explicit grammar teaching:

> I try to vary the methods as much as possible, I try to vary it from the traditional chalk-and-talk approach to individual and group work ... some grounding in grammar as we go along ... the totally communicative approach isn't really suitable, obviously where ... possible we like to use it, but we do feel that they need some grammar grounding to enable them to cope with the later stages of the course. (B3)

> I try and use a mixed approach ... I tend to teach in topics ... Because this group is doing the language for quite a while, I try to do quite a bit of grammar ... because I feel that by the time they get to outcome 6, where they're required to write letters, they really do need to know how sentences hang together. (B4)

> We're going to have to do more of that [grammar], because we've found that moving from speaking to writing that the grammar isn't there. (B1)

> ... in the modular system, given the short length of time ... the acquisition of sound grammatical skills with a view to producing any writing ... is a very weak spot. (B1)

The reliance on commercially-produced textbooks was not always a matter of unconstrained choice. In some cases the expansion of provision had meant that teaching staff were unable to produce enough teaching materials to keep pace with the new courses:

> [Years ago] we started sitting down and having long meetings about what we should be doing and how we should be doing it ... and we took upon ourselves a team approach, so from then on all materials were pooled ... We used to make up our own units. We decided to teach on the basis of themes ... But it got to the stage as the work load increased on us that we just couldn't keep up with it. So we turned to books, which is now about three years ago ... We've had a bit of trouble getting an appropriate book, and you've still got to supplement it with your own stuff, because we're very keen on the communicative approach, which of course is what the books are into now anyway. (B5)

The complaint about having difficulty in finding an appropriate textbook was echoed in several of these case-studies.

Not all of the staff in the case-study courses said that they made use of commercially-available textbooks as the basis of their teaching. For example, case-studies A1 and A2 were entirely structured around materials produced by the teaching staff. However, even in some of these case-studies, responses from the students indicate that some of them had used textbooks. It is not therefore straightforward to distinguish between those courses which make use of commercially-available textbooks and those which do not. We can, however, identify case-studies B1, B2, B3, B4, B5, and C1 as instances where at least part of the teaching is structured around material in commercially-available textbooks (see Table 7). In all of these case-studies staff reported some measure of dissatisfaction with the textbooks which they were using:

> I'm not really that happy with any of the books on the market...You've got to consolidate and extend all the time ... I feel that [textbook] doesn't really push students who have come to university with a Higher ... Certainly on the grammar side it's pretty weak. (C1)

> ... that book ... although it's quite good the activities are not just quite enough for making them act out, we do have to make our own role plays, we try to get them used to reading newspaper articles. (C1)

> ... I don't really like [named textbook] at all, it's very traditional...there's very little German text in it, not very much on tape for them to practise with, it progresses very quickly on to difficult grammar points...(B4)

Too much grammar, too little grammar, mismatches between the demands made by the textbooks and the abilities of the students, or inappropriate exercises, it seemed that there would always be some grounds for dissatisfaction with any textbook. Yet there were reasons for choosing to structure the teaching around a textbook which were more than simply a matter of tradition. These were particularly apparent in case-study C1, and reflected the lack of time available to develop new materials, the need for some means of structuring the course, and the desire to ensure that students had some point of reference for their studying:

> I would prefer to develop my own materials, but there's a limit to what can be done in the time ... (C1)

> [Reason for choosing a textbook] I felt it was very important that we had a structure, this was at a time when we had no course descriptors...so we had to stay with the book. (C1)

> We need a textbook..because it gives the students something to rely on at home, something to fall back on, and also because we are several lecturers teaching several classes, it kind of forces us to follow...we do need a textbook of some kind. (C1)

Similar comments could have been quoted from staff in other case-studies. In almost all instances teaching staff would prefer to work with their own self-developed materials, and in most cases they were developing them as and when they could. Nevertheless there were seen to be these practical advantages in making use of textbooks.

It is also worth noting that students in most of these case-studies reported fairly widespread use of textbooks (see Table 6) and that one quarter of them found them to be 'very helpful' while another two thirds said that they were 'fairly helpful' (Table 5). Therefore it would appear that, despite the reported problems in finding appropriate textbooks, they have a place amongst the range of resources available to teaching staff.

While all of the case-study courses would claim to be based on communicative teaching methods, there were instances where the staff concerned would claim that the ideal had to be diluted. This was particularly so where beginners were being taught:

> ... we have moved back [from the communicative approach]. We've kept the group work, we've kept the commitment to speak..in the bulk of my French classes I speak only French. With the first year groups you can't afford to be as idealistic as that ... because you discover that a lot of them are quite insecure about a class in a foreign language ... (B5)

In case-study B1, National Certificate modular provision had replaced previous courses which had been highly resource-based and had allowed for a degree of independent learning by students. Paradoxically, while

the general effect of the introduction of the National Certificate had been to introduce great changes in teaching methods in the languages section as a whole, there were particular courses (including the case-study course) which some staff thought were taught in a less student-centred way than in the past. There appeared to be several reasons for this: one was the move away from courses with end examinations which had provided a focus for the teaching; another was the increasing provision being made for complete beginners; and a third was the equation by some of the staff of 'student-centred learning' with 'independent study':

> Modules came in, which was a drastic revision in our teaching methods, because they were the first types of courses to do away with exams and go over entirely to assessment and to be student-centred rather than taught as such. (B1)

> We used ... a resource-based approach for many years. When modules 1 and 2 came along we found that was hopeless, you had to go back to what might be termed old-fashioned classroom teaching ... You cannot say to a beginner "Go away and listen to this and make sense of it", you've got to - I don't know if it's the right approach - but I read the dialogue to them, they repeat it and then they do it in paired talks with one another ... By the time they get to module 3 you can give them materials to work on individually. So in that sense the student-centred thing was turned on its head, because we were student-centred and these came along and we had to give it up because they were not able to cope by themselves. (B1)

> I'm finding I'm having to change approaches ... the way we started out it should have been easily transposed into modules and it wasn't, because we'd been aiming at a final exam, and we'd been basically doing exercises for that exam and we found that when we came to NC we had to change methods, teaching directly ... the students wanted more directed teaching rather than self-access. (B1)

These quotations also raise questions about **what** was taught. It may be that 'doing exercises for that exam' allowed for independent self-paced study by the students, but one can ask if the kinds of language skills the students were learning were the most appropriate. Much, of course, would depend on the use to which they intended to put their foreign languages. Nevertheless, there is a clear view amongst these teachers that it is necessary to use some form of directed teaching with complete beginners, and that it is only once they have acquired a basic degree of competence and confidence that more independent methods of study can be promoted.

Teaching methods in degree and postgraduate courses

Our group of case-studies included one which took languages to degree level (case-study C1) and one at postgraduate level for those with degrees, or equivalent, in languages (case-study C2). In both, the emphasis was once again on the development of communicative competence. What distinguishes both these case-study courses from the others, however, is that the students arrived with a much greater level of linguistic competence, and were expecting (and were expected by the staff) to reach a higher level

of attainment by the end of the course. The professional context in which students would be required to operate later in their careers was clearly also of relevance:

> We reckoned that there was an overemphasis on grammatical accuracy in the past ... we've placed a greater emphasis on communication skill ... Communicative competence is the goal ... wherever possible we look at subject-specific themes. We tend to expand the context, we're not pushing the language in terms of ... grammatical accuracy ... transferable skills is really what we're looking at. (C1)

> The emphasis is ... more on being dynamic rather than on being absolutely accurate ... It's communicative ability that we're looking for. (C2)

However, the emphasis on communicative competence is tempered by the realisation that, although

> success is no longer defined as grammatical accuracy ... it plays a part, because obviously it contributes to the effectiveness of communication. (C1)

The professional context in which students will operate requires a high degree of fluency and accuracy:

> The keynote of the whole department is communicative competence ... but I also feel that it needs to be supported by a certain amount of grammar. They can get by in communicating, but if you're wanting them to operate in fairly formal circumstances, they've also got to have a notion of accuracy. (C1)

And yet grammar teaching can play more than an instrumental role. Some students who have already demonstrated considerable expertise in foreign language learning, as in case-study C2, find grammar intrinsically fascinating. As one lecturer put it: 'some students just love doing grammar exercises.'

In both these case-studies, there was extensive use of the target language in class teaching. One member of staff saw the use of the target language as the language of instruction and classroom management as a key factor in enabling students to respond flexibly to a variety of situations, some of which would be unforeseen:

> The whole notion of having tuition in the FL is in fact an example of using language to help you improvise ... (C1)

There is an interesting point of contrast between the use of the foreign language as described above and its use in case-study A2. In the latter case, the foreign language is used extensively to prepare students (or clients) to deal with highly-specialised material in a narrowly-defined professional context in the target language. In case-study C1, it is used to enable them to respond flexibly to a range of situations within a general vocational area.

In both case-studies C1 and C2, the notion of communicative competence also extends to the skill of writing. The course co-ordinator of case-study C2 expressed caution as to the level to which students could be expected to perform in writing:

> We wouldn't really expect them to produce that [Level 5 in writing] ... although they do, but we say ... that they can produce it, but they must tell the company that it's not to be printed, because we don't want brochures printed at vast expense with a wide audience, containing ... not mistakes ... but certain unfortunate turns of phrase ... At this level you would really have to work very closely with a native speaker in order to obtain the level they'd be looking for in the company. (C2)

It is debatable how many native speakers of a language could produce texts fit for publication without first having built up a considerable body of experience. This might suggest that element W5.4 of the final version of the Languages Lead Body's National Language Standards, which reads 'produce texts intended for public consumption' is unrealistic, unless it is further qualified, even for students at postgraduate level.

There was some disquiet among the staff in case-study C1 as regards the status of writing in the course, but this was a particular concern relating to academic forms of writing. Students on this course were expected to spend their third year studying abroad and this led to a clash between the vocational purpose of the course and the potential academic needs of the students during this year. Staff were concerned that they might not be equipping their students with the study skills they would need during their year abroad:

> We were all aware that they weren't getting enough practice in note-taking, for example, given that one of our remits is to prepare them for going abroad. (C1)

> ... that kind of formal essay-writing is something that you're probably less likely to be able to re-use afterwards ... We've taken a decision by default that we're not going to teach that, but it does mean that they're going to be badly equipped for next year. (C1)

The second quotation illustrates the dilemma faced by staff, and expressed cogently by a third member of staff in the same department:

> Are we supposed to train them for their professional life or for their year abroad? ... I feel we're doing a bit of both, simply because we haven't had straight replies from the business school. None of us has been invited to go abroad and monitor the students. (C1)

As in the other case-studies we have looked at, teaching methods at degree level were also to some extent influenced by the practice of timetabling three-hour blocks for foreign language teaching. In their report of December 1991, the HMI had identified this as a practice which

> ... did little to maintain the interest and attention of students, especially where departments had given little thought to breaking up the blocks by varying the teachers or activities or by pairing modern languages with another subject block elsewhere during the week.
>
> *(Modern Languages in Further and Higher Education. A Report by HM Inspectors of Schools, SOED, 1991, p7.)*

Staff in case-study C1 appeared to be making attempts to maintain students' interest by adopting a variety of teaching approaches:

> A three-hour block isn't ideal. You've got to mix and match it a bit. (C1)

> My approach is determined very much by the fact that we have one three-hour lump per week, so I try to give them a varied diet within that three hours ... I do try to give them a passive section, where they'll be reading or listening fairly extensively, to give them a wee bit of a break. (C1)

In case-study C2 a great deal of focus is given to much of the course by the existence of a commercial/industrial placement as a major component of the course. This is a two-week placement with a company which involves the students working abroad in the country of their main foreign language, on behalf of that company. The European Project, as the placement is known, provides a unifying element for much of the course. The work that the students do in their projects is usually concerned with some form of market research or market development for their host companies. It is thus directly relevant both to the company and to the students' future careers. The course co-ordinator explained how the initial part of the course was largely directed at the class as a whole but, once the projects had been decided upon, much of the following work was tailored to the requirements of the individual student's project:

> Until they find out what their Project is we're all pointing in the same direction. So when we get to the end of the first term we're well into the negotiation. Then ... we put the whole thing back using their companies. (C2)

> No other course has that unique combination of using the language in the marketing context for all the students [re Project]. (C2)

> The ideas that come with the Projects, we're meeting these people and we're going out with the students ... that's a big source of ideas ... Most of us have either a qualification or experience in marketing ... it tends to be from that ... and the framework is built from that. (C2)

Students thus develop and practise a specific skill (negotiation) which is then set in a particular context (preparation for the European Project), which is a specific export marketing task involving the promotion of a company's interests in one European market (Belgium, France, Germany or Spain). Students are required to prepare a short report of their Project.

Case-study C2 was also the case-study which included the greatest use of technology as an aid to teaching. The students had access to video and satellite television materials from the countries of their main foreign language, and the department also produced its own video teaching material. At the time of the fieldwork, students were making their final preparations for their European Project and were making extensive use of this video material as part of their background research:

> There has been a number of hours put aside for the production of video material ... Certainly materially the support is very much there ... We have now an excellent project room, equipped with eighteen computers, we've got a fax machine, a telephone ... In production of material I think like everywhere else and everyone else I think time is the problem. ... we do have a series of these situations and presentations and so on that we just try and update during the summer period. (C2)

Only one other case-study institution (case-study B5) had comparably extensive technological resources, but even these were limited and were not used with the case-study course:

> We're not all doing it with all our classes because there was a transtition point where there weren't enough MAC labs ... (B5)

In this section we have looked at the range of teaching strategies staff claim to be using in the case-study courses; at how the level of foreign language competence aimed for influences the teaching strategies adopted; and, briefly, at how other factors, such as timetabling practices, impinge upon teaching style.

4 Assessment

In this section, we shall explore the range of assessment methods used in our nine case-studies and convey staff's views on their appropriateness. Given that assessment methods are to some extent influenced by the nature and purpose of the language teaching provision, we shall maintain the three broad case-study groupings introduced in Chapter One.

Before we look at these three groups of case-studies in more detail, it is worth noting the general preference for some form of continuous assessment. All of the case-studies made some use of continuous assessment, in various degrees of formality. For National Certificate and Higher National courses this is, of course, a design feature of SCOTVEC's system, but even in non-SCOTVEC courses it was much in evidence.

This is not to say that all of the case-study courses relied entirely on continuous assessment. Indeed, as we shall see, they ranged from courses in which the course leader claimed that there was almost no assessment at all (though 'assessment' was used in this context to mean formal assessment), through to courses in which the final certification of the students depended, to at least some extent, upon their performance in examinations.

It is interesting that the two case-studies which used examinations were the degree and postgraduate courses in which languages were a major element, and both were in new universities. The third new university included in the project did not use examinations for the case-study course, but we were told that this was because the vocational department for which the languages department was providing the languages options had specifically requested that continuous assessment should be used. The norm within this institution was for a mixture of continuous assessment and end-examination. Within further education colleges end-examinations were not even mentioned to us as a possibility.

Assessment in customised language courses

As we saw in the section on teaching methods, the emphasis in case-studies A1 and A2 was on the development of aural/oral skills. In both instances, this emphasis was reflected in the assessment procedures. The course leader in case-study A1 was a firm believer in continuous assessment as the appropriate approach to the assessment of foreign language learning. Nevertheless, he felt that, even within the SCOTVEC system, there were constraints which limited teachers' freedom to integrate their assessment procedures fully into their teaching:

> There's no need in languages to stop and do an assessment ... the assessment should be seamless in languages. The thing that stops that at the moment is the threat of the assessor coming in to check that you've done it. (A1)

A similar view of an ideal form of assessment integrated entirely within teaching was expressed by a member of staff in case-study B1 (which was not one of the customised courses for those in employment but was, like case-study A1, based upon National Certificate modules). This member of staff described how too much concentration on producing assessment materials had prevented the ideal from becoming reality:

> ... in the early days ... we wrote a lot of assessment material, which looking back I think was a mistake, because really the teaching and assessment should be virtually the same and what we've got is our teaching material and our assessment material and it's not a continuous stream ... it doesn't flow as ... it should. (B1)

Case-study A2 differed from case-study A1 in that there were no formal qualifications awarded on completion of the course. It is interesting to note that when the course leader in this case-study commented on assessment, the comments appeared to relate to formalised assessment of the type required by National Certificate modules or Higher National units:

> Assessment doesn't really come into these courses at all. Mostly they don't want to be assessed ... I give them a questionnaire half way through the course, but that's really for me. Occasionally I have to write a report to the training officer ... this is where they started off, this is what they've learned, this is what they can do, and very often this is what they cannot do. (A2)

It is clear that in order to write such a report for a training officer some type of assessment - however informal - must have taken place, and that it is formalised assessment for summative purposes which is being rejected. This is entirely in line with the ideal of 'seamless' assessment and teaching expressed in case-study A1.

The constraints upon putting this ideal into practice appear to have been caused by two factors. The first of these was the unfamiliarity of teaching staff with the process of developing college-based continuous assessment at the time that SCOTVEC courses were introduced. This may have led, as suggested above, to an undue emphasis upon the creation of separate assessment materials. The second factor is related to this, and reflects the teaching staff's concern to ensure that they have the evidence available to produce for the verification of their college-based assessment through SCOTVEC's quality assurance system (originally operated by officials known as 'subject assessors' and 'moderators').

Assessment in National Certificate, Higher National and non-specialist courses

There were five case-studies in this group, four of which were leading to SCOTVEC-validated awards (two National Certificate and two Higher National). The fifth was a non-specialist language option offered within

a degree course to civil engineering students. This course had no formal award attached to it. It was designed as a fairly basic introduction to either French or German for complete beginners, and was continuously assessed. It is interesting that it was the vocational subject department, and not the languages department which requested that there should be no end-examination for the course. Assessment did not appear to be an issue which caused any great concern to the languages department:

> One major difference, and again this comes from their side, not from ours, was that they didn't want a final exam ... they wanted the course to be a hundred per cent continuous assessment ... Fine, I'm all for it ... I think the fact of just being in this particular area is different for us. (B5)

> I ... don't believe that there's any fundamental difference at that level between a hundred per cent continuous assessment and something like 60/40 which is our normal pattern ... because the written exam is very small in proportion and it doesn't include activities that you cannot and indeed do not do as part of the continuous assessment. (B5)

Assessment for the other four courses in this group of case-studies was governed by the requirements of SCOTVEC. Both SCOTVEC's National Certificate modules and Higher National units exhibit broadly similar assessment characteristics in that they are both based on a form of criterion-referenced assessment in which students' performances are judged, by their teachers, against agreed statements of competence and standards of performance.

All four of these case-studies catered for students who were mostly beginners, and two general issues emerged from interviews with the teaching staff. The first of these concerned the amount of assessment which was required; the second the demands made of the students by the assessment. These concerns were equally applicable to the National Certificate and the Higher National courses.

In case-studies B3 and B4, the pattern and content of assessment is determined by the procedures set out in the specification for the Higher National unit 'Second Language for Business'. The teachers in the case-study courses emphasised the importance of oral skills. All six outcomes in the Higher National units are assessed, some repeatedly. In general, the staff we interviewed were satisfied that the assessment procedures were appropriate. They did, however, have some misgivings as to the number of assessments required:

> We've probably still got a bit much in the way of assessment ... it has been quite time-consuming, even although we've cut down the number.(B4)

> I think they're suitable ... I think there's still too much assessment though. Five assessments for Outcome 1 is still quite a lot. In terms of tutor time it's a lot.(B4)

> There has been a little bit of a problem in that some of the units were thought to be overassessed ... it does seem to take a heck of a long time to get through a very modest number. (B4)

A member of staff in case-study B1 had the same misgivings in respect of the amount of assessment required by some National Certificate modules:

> Module 1, no problem. Module 2, rather more pressurized. The big problem ... is that as you go up the scale, Module 3, for instance, the number of assessments to be done, it can become almost assessment dominated, you're rushing so much, you've got twelve weeks with three hours a week to get through the module. It's a race against the clock, and if there's any absence ... they rush in at the end and miraculously want you to get them through all the missing assessments ... I disapprove of that.. (B1)

As well as these worries about the amount of assessment required, there were also some concerns expressed about some of the specific assessment demands being made of students. One member of staff in case-study B4 felt that Outcome 3 (interpreting) of the Higher National unit was too demanding an exercise for students who had only had limited exposure to the foreign language:

> The interpreting was ridiculously difficult ... it was getting on to post-'H' standard for people who'd only had 120 hours of the language. (B4)

Another consideration about the demands made by the assessment, which was encountered in both Higher National and National Certificate courses, concerned the relationship between the primarily oral/aural nature of the courses and the need to assess the students' writing skills in the foreign language. For example, in case-study B4, Outcome 6 of the Higher National unit requires that students should 'compose simple business correspondence in the foreign language'. This switch in focus from oral to written assessment was a source of concern to one member of staff in case-study B4:

> I think that makes it difficult, having so much emphasis on the oral for most of the course, all of a sudden I start saying to them, "we're going to have to start looking at how to write letters" and they're looking at me as if to say "how do you expect us to do that?"(B4)

Her comments were echoed by two members of staff in case-study B1, referring to a National Certificate course:

> Yes, I like the amount of oral and aural work ... I think some of the written assessments are very taxing ... the skill of writing correct language is very difficult to achieve in the time given. (B1)
>
> I think writing letters is inappropriate at this stage. (B1)
>
> I think there are too many and I think sometimes they're not appropriate ... to the level ... I think writing letters in the foreign language is inappropriate at this stage ... in Standard Grade you have a model letter and you write a similar letter where you've just got to substitute some information ... that's possible at the end of module 2, but where we're getting them to read a letter ... and reply to it in the foreign language after such a short time of study, they're finding it really difficult ... They're expecting them to do the same as they did in 'O' grade ... They don't have the grammar, they can't transpose the verbs in the way that they have to in replying to letters ... and some of the reading and understanding they're finding difficult ... we've got to use authentic texts ... I think we're pitching the level too high at the moment. (B1)

Against these specific worries about assessment in National Certificate modules and Higher National units must be set a more general worry which some staff expressed about the need to devise their own assessment instruments, and the difficulties they face in writing them at the right level. One member of staff in case-study B4 referred to assessment materials produced by a consortium of colleges in the region. These had proved unsatisfactory:

> X was sent a pile of assessments from a consortium ... but they were ... far too difficult. Last year ... a group of colleges got together, because everybody was finding the same problem with these assessments. (B4)

The difficulties colleges are experiencing in devising assessments at the appropriate level have to be set in the context of the great expansion of Higher National courses comprising a foreign language element. Staff are under considerable pressure to develop new courses, and are clearly still learning from their experience. Their difficulties are, in part at least, related to certain misconceptions regarding the appropriate entry level for students on Higher National courses. As a member of staff in case-study B4 explained:

> We really had to go by what was on the unit form because we hadn't any experience of it, we didn't know what the students would have on entry ... at first we based it on people who would have a reasonable 'O' Grade or perhaps a Higher, but subsequently we found out that that really was not what SCOTVEC was envisaging ... and we opened it to absolute beginners this year. (B4)

Assessment in degree and postgraduate courses

The postgraduate diploma course that was the focus of case-study C2 was originally developed some years ago and last revised and validated according to CNAA guidelines. Seventy per cent of assessment was by examination and thirty per cent by continuous assessment. All elements of the course were assessed: translation, prose, précis, composition, presentation, aural comprehension and negotiation. As much of the course revolved around preparation for the student's two-week placement abroad, assessment too had become individualised.

The degree course that was the focus of case-study C1 had undergone some changes as far as assessment procedures were concerned. The original intention was that fifty per cent of the course would be continuously assessed and fifty per cent assessed by end-of-course examination. This proved impossible to implement because of the high percentage of part-time staff (the ratio of full- to part-time staff is approaching 50/50) and because of the demands made on staff time by continuous assessment. This meant that there were insufficient staff to put a system of continuous assessment into practice. Examinations had been used as a means of coping with this situation:

> On the ... course there is nominally continuous assessment ... but it boils down to an exam at Christmas ... listening, speaking, reading, writing ... (C1)

> [on current assessment procedures] ... that is an unsatisfactory state of affairs ... but we've intimated to the host school, the busines school, that we wish to change the course. (C1)

Another member of staff expressed some dissatisfaction at the solution adopted:

> If we're going to have two exams, I feel it is unfair to have a 50/50 weighting because the amount you can cover in one term is minimal ... I think continuous assessment gives you more opportunity to test the kind of skills that they would have to exhibit in real life, the fact that if you're writing a business letter you would not sit down without a dictionary. (C1)

There were differences in opinion within the department as to whether the use of a dictionary should be permitted. One member of staff thought the writing component of the assessment should comprise two sections, during only one of which students could use a dictionary:

> ... we don't allow them to use a dictionary, which is a matter of some controversy ... I think that they shouldn't, because I think we really ought to be able to see what they can produce without these aids ... What I'd like to see ideally is a part of the exam where they could use their dictionary, because that would test their dictionary skills. (C1)

Two members of staff expressed some disquiet as to the way in which listening skills were assessed:

> the listening is far too controlled ... there's no real scope for gist comprehension ... we're trying to encourage a range of listening skills and we only test half of them ... they are allowed to go back and listen to things several times, which is not really that realistic. (C1)

> I feel we test intensive listening skills, pretty much out of context ... in real life terms, extensive listening skills are more important, because you're rarely going to be in a situation where you have to get every single detail down, and if you are, it's going to be interactive, you're going to be able to check back. (C1)

There was also some disquiet about the way in which speaking skills were assessed:

> The speaking is really dressed-up translation. I try to encourage them not to write down their answers. I'd very much like to be able to do a one-to-one role play with them as an exam. I'd also like to see ongoing speaking throughout the year, where you could maybe ask them to give a presentation ... so you'd really be stressing presentation skills. (C1)

In general, the picture which emerges from this case-study is of a fairly traditional and formalised system of assessment, but with an awareness amongst the staff that this is not an ideal state of affairs.

5 Relationship between foreign language teaching and vocational subject teaching

Development of courses

In the report entitled *Modern Languages in Further and Higher Education* (SOED, 1991) HM Inspectorate drew attention to what was described as the 'servicing nature' of much foreign languages provision (p 10). As we shall see, this servicing role persists in many institutions, and is a key element in determining the relationship between foreign language teaching and teaching in vocational subject departments.

In the majority of cases (case-studies B1, B2, B3, B4, B5, C1 and C2), the foreign language component of the degree, postgraduate, Higher National and National Certificate courses concerned was developed in response to a request from the vocational subject department. However, modern languages departments played a role in shaping the overall development of the course to varying degrees. As we shall see below in relation to case-study C2, the extent to which the language department was initially involved and continues to be involved in overall course design and development is an important factor in determining the degree of integration between foreign language and vocational subject teaching.

It would, however, be misleading to give the impression that the role of modern languages departments is purely reactive. Indeed our case-studies demonstrate a variety of ways in which languages departments have succeeded in creating a demand for a languages option within a vocational subject department. In case-study B5, for example, there is a long tradition of collaborative working relations between the languages department and the 'host' vocational subject department. The languages department had done some translation work for the vocational subject department, and the institution in general. According to the senior lecturer in the languages department, this had generated 'a lot of good will' and had predisposed course organisers to include a language option in their courses. The course organiser also referred to ways in which the languages department had been able to capitalise on an existing interest in languages among staff in vocational departments, or had generated an interest where previously none had existed, through offering language classes to staff in other departments.

The course co-ordinator of case-study C1, where a similar strategy was employed, also explained that offering languages as part of a staff development initiative fulfils a dual function by demonstrating to the staff concerned what it is that their students are faced with and thus persuading course designers to be realistic about what can be achieved.

In some cases, as in case-study B4, for example, it was not always easy to determine precisely who had provided the initial impetus for developing a languages option:

> I suppose you could say [it resulted from] my efforts, coupled with good will on behalf of the head of department concerned. (B4)

The same interviewee alluded to successful attempts to convert colleagues in other departments:

> I think in a way we pushed for it ourselves ... and suggested to people that they might like to go into these areas ... the Business Studies and Office Management people were very keen to have [languages] in their course, so it became a joint effort. (B4)

There had also been an external impetus for the rapid development of language options in vocational areas:

> The big breakthrough ... came a couple of years ago when the Region sent out a mandate which said that all National Certificate courses had to have certain elements within them, and one of those was a language. And if the language was not offered, then there had to be some kind of European awareness module offered in its place. (B4)

In case-study C1, although the initiative for the development of the course had been taken by senior management in the Business School, it was in response to a 'Europeanisation' policy enshrined in the Corporate Plan of the institution. However, as one member of staff pointed out, espousing the 'European dimension' of the Corporate Plan did not necessarily demonstrate a wholehearted commitment to the inclusion of a foreign languages element in a course. This comment vividly illustrates some of the disadvantages associated with the service role modern languages departments so often have to adopt:

> They're not really interested in languages, they're just paying lip-service to Europe. They may want to tart up their courses to get students in the door ... they often don't offer us the courtesy of saying come and join in our discussions ... they tend to want to present you with a *fait accompli* ... they show us no respect as professionals. I think it's a very British view, a very British approach to service, this idea that somehow people who serve us are not as good. (C1)

Both the case-study courses offering customised foreign language courses for those already in employment were developed by the languages departments in the respective colleges. The Japanese course which was the focus of case-study A1 is based on a similar Spanish course which was partly funded by the EC. In case-study A2, the development of customised courses for industry was encouraged as a way of bringing money into the college:

> What was fostered was the developments in industry and commerce, because certainly in the first three years that made an awful lot of money, and that was very much appreciated. (A2)

With the exception of the development of the case-study course and other customised courses for employers run by the college, the department in this institution fulfils the servicing role highlighted in the HMI report

Modern Languages in Further and Higher Education (SOED, 1991). There is a suggestion in our interviews in this college that the modern languages department '[has] to rely on other cost centres which might not always understand the particular needs of language teaching.' (HMI report, p 10) This adds further weight to the recommendation in the same report to the effect that

> ways have to be found to disaggregate costs or to fund modern languages from central college budgets. (p 10)

We have reviewed how courses were developed in our nine case-studies. Let us now turn our attention to the extent to which foreign language teaching is integrated with teaching in the vocational subject departments.

Degree of integration between foreign language and vocational subject teaching

In case-studies A1 and A2 (the customised courses), the level of integration between foreign language teaching and the vocational subject of the students was high. In case-study A2, much of the material used in the course was an adaptation of material produced by the company:

> [The company] is always asking for new materials, letters, etc, they tippex the names out ... and we just give a letter like that to absolute beginners. (A2)

In case-study A1 too, much of the course material is based on foreign language versions of the publicity material those working in the tourist industry use daily:

> A lot of the stuff they actually deal with is tourist information about Scotland in the foreign language. (A1)

The head of this department was a firm believer in close integration between modern languages teaching and the 'host' vocational subject area:

> Integration is vital ... one of the problems is is the language really part of the course or is it an add-on? I think there's still a dilemma between training someone to do a function in the language and the generic skills. (A1)

There is a clear division between case-studies A1 and A2, both of which offer customised provision to employers, and providers of other non-advanced foreign languages courses. As we saw in the section on teaching methods, staff in case-studies A1 and A2 believe that it is possible to introduce vocationally-specific terminology in the foreign language from an early stage. One might thus expect to find that these courses were more closely integrated with the 'host' vocational area.

Staff in case-studies B1 and B5, on the other hand, came down firmly on the side of the development of generic skills for beginners. As one interviewee in case-study B1 put it:

> My attitude has always been that a beginner is a beginner ... to me there's no difference between a holiday-maker booking a hotel room

> and a business man booking a hotel room. I think there has to be a threshold level before they can benefit from going off into a more vocational area. (B1)

One member of staff in case-study B5 felt that this focus on the development of generic skills, especially for beginners, precluded integration:

> Once they've done about 60 hours, yes, you can start to integrate, certainly in a fairly generalistic way, a kind of industrial area ... not necessarily specifically tied down to a particular field of operation. Before that you have to establish certain grammatical patterns. (B5)

A colleague in the same department felt that languages had to be a compulsory part of the course for a much longer period for some degree of integration to be possible:

> It's still too early ... The great aim ... [is] ... first of all to get a language as a compulsory part of the course, of certain courses. I would like them [the students] to do the general course for two or three years and then have a specialist layer. I could envisage a science/technology stream, a business stream and a social science stream. At the moment we don't take them far enough. (B5)

Case-study C2 presents some interesting examples of different models of integration. Before we look at these in detail, however, it is important to bear in mind the high degree of linguistic competence demonstrated by students on this course. They had long since passed beyond what we might term the 'vocational specificity threshold'.

Staff in case-study C2 had run through three distinct phases before arriving at the present successful model. As the course co-ordinator explained:

> The experiment that was tried to integrate the marketing and language through a joint programme, multi-teaching activity that we were all in different rooms and everybody was together, the languages staff and the marketing staff ... very, very time-consuming ... for what proved to be an integration that was not seen by the students, or for that matter by some members of staff, to be a true integration. (C2)

Attempts at team-teaching having failed, staff then opted for what the course co-ordinator described as 'immediate and almost direct integration'. This involved frequent liaison between modern languages teaching staff and their colleagues in vocational subject departments. In the end the system proved unworkable:

> It was interesting that when you try to get immediate and almost direct integration it is almost by definition going to fall apart. We tried that, rush to the languages person and give him the marketing programme for that week ... it was impossible ... all you need is one day's holiday and the whole thing gets out of kilter. (C2)

The solution which was finally adopted, and which has proved successful, is described by the course co-ordinator as follows:

> We have an input of ... organisation behaviour, economics, financial management, law, microcomputing and then marketing ... Language comes on to that ... We are giving the students the context in the country that refers to these subjects ... we're talking about the structure

> of the company, the organisation of the company, the economy of the company. We're also through the languages exercises, negotiation, presentation, letter-writing and so on, integrating the marketing. On the other side the marketing has a European emphasis that will actually work towards the student's project which will come to integrate the whole of the course. In the economics class, they're actually doing the economy of the country where they're doing their project. (C2)

It must be borne in mind, however, that the case-study C2 model of integration is not one that can be easily replicated in other institutions, as it is dependent on highly-qualified students all studying the same vocational area and staff who have worked in the vocational area concerned.

The problems caused by having groups of students from disparate vocational subject areas were also noted elsewhere:

> if you've got a mixed group, you can't get into the work [-related language] really.(B1)

As far as Higher National provision is concerned, our interviewees' responses to the question 'to what extent is language teaching integrated with other vocational subects?' are illuminating. Staff tended to see 'integration' in terms of broadly overlapping subject areas rather than as arising from co-ordinated course planning:

> It isn't integrated really, I mean it's not integrated into the curriculum. Obviously for the Business Studies students and the secretarial students we look at telephone techniques and business letters, so I suppose in that sense it's integrated. And it's integrated in role-play situations ... I think when we're doing the business language modules there'll probably be a much closer link than there is at the moment. (B3)

> It ties in quite nicely with Communication in certain aspects. There is a cross-over obviously with the Business section ... doing telexes and things. (B4)

One member of staff in case-study B4 identified an area where she thought that greater integration could occur. It was premissed on the effective liaison between modern languages staff and their colleagues in other departments. The same quotation provides some evidence that this was not happening:

> With the Office Management people ... this is something I'd like to work on, I know their department would be quite happy for example for them to produce letters on their wordprocessors ... This would be very useful to them, to be able to produce it properly. Because they're dealing with reception skills or 'phone call technique, that's something ... that follows on from their course ... the Business Studies people I'm not sure about ... we don't know a lot about their course. (B4)

Some of these problems can be traced back to the 'servicing role' many modern languages departments are forced to adopt, particularly in further education.

One of our interviewees in case-study C1 pointed to a mismatch in the level of vocationally-related language introduced in the language element of the course and the level of discourse in the discrete vocational areas which made up the course as a whole:

> Another thing that concerns me is linking it in with what they study here ... I sometimes suspect that we're teaching much more nuts and bolts than business French than what they actually need right now. In some ways I think they need more economic and commercial French ... I think the distinction isn't made between business French and business German, which is really just enhanced secretarial ... and talking about the economy and marketing strategies ... business culture and business theory ... (C1)

This comment echoes the misgivings of a member of staff in case-study A1 as regards the possible mismatch between language competence, expected salary and required level of performance:

> A university linguist expects a reasonably good salary, whereas business wants to pay people who can operate a telephone, which is basically a clerical grade ... But they'll not get that because they're not doing vocational languages properly. (A1)

In this section we have looked at who initiated the development of the respective case-study courses, the vocational subject department or the modern languages department. We have also looked at the extent to which modern languages teaching is integrated with teaching in the vocational subject area. We may conclude the following:

- To a great extent, modern languages departments still fulfil the servicing role identified in the HMI report *Modern Languages in Further and Higher Education* (SOED 1991). This is particularly apparent in further education.
- Modern languages departments in further education often have to draw students from a variety of vocational areas to make courses viable. This limits the extent to which it is possible to introduce vocationally-specific terminology in the foreign language.
- There is a school of thought that there is a threshold in terms of competence in the foreign language below which it is not possible to introduce subject-specific vocabulary and thus integrate students' foreign language study with the rest of their course.
- Case-studies A1 and A2, on the other hand, provide evidence that it is possible to introduce vocationally-specific terminology in the foreign language at an early stage.
- Integration of language teaching with vocational subject teaching is easier to achieve at degree and postgraduate levels, where the relative linguistic competence of the students facilitates this.

6 Conclusions and discussion

The case-studies highlighted in this report demonstrate the very wide range of students who are studying foreign languages in institutions of further and higher education. They encompassed a range from complete beginners through to those with language degrees; adult returners whose primary motivation was to gain access to higher education, through to those whose need was for specific language skills which they required in their employment; and a large middle group who saw the learning of a foreign language as an additional means of enhancing their employment prospects.

The importance which all of these students gave to the vocational purpose of their language learning was striking. There was a tendency for students in all groups to regard the usefulness of a foreign language for their future employment as their most important reason for studying a language. For most, however, it was a potentially useful adjunct to their vocational course and not their main reason for choosing the particular course which they were studying. The vocational subject was the main motivating factor. Only in the case-studies of the degree and postgraduate courses did students cite the language element as the main reason for their choice of course, and in these case-studies the students were already relatively competent linguists.

It was also noticeable that those students who entered their courses with a lower level of previous language qualification, and who tended to have lower aspirations, also tended to rate the role the course could play in enhancing their general education more highly.

In general the aspirations of the students were realistic and tended to match the type of course which they were taking. Most did not expect to become 'expert' linguists and the staff teaching them had similar 'middle level' aspirations for the students. Some of these staff claimed that there was a place in business and industry for this middle level of linguistic competence. However, it remains an open question whether there is a demand for such from industry.

Institutional factors

The two main institutional factors which appeared to affect the case-study courses were the prevalence of part-time staff and the extent of the resources available.

Part-time staff tended to face particular problems in that they were less likely to be given time to develop their courses or teaching materials; they

might have difficulty in finding time to meet colleagues; and they were more likely to be without a permanent base (even where the department had such a base), or have access to such facilities as language laboratories (where these existed). These problems were compounded in departments where there were few full-time staff and a high proportion of part-time staff.

Problems associated with part-time staff are not, of course, confined to languages departments, but given that many of these departments were relatively newly established, they may have been felt more acutely in them. Devising a strategy which will overcome some of these problems and which will allow part-time staff to integrate more fully into departments is perhaps a matter which goes beyond the department itself and should be a concern of the senior managements of the institutions involved.

The resources available to the language departments running the case-study courses varied considerably. Some of the longer established departments had permanent language bases, extensive audio and video resources, and were beginning to explore the possibilities of computer-assisted language learning. Others were much less fortunate. However, the amount and type of resources available to language departments appeared to bear at least some relationship to the length of time they had been established and it may be that the newer departments will, in time, acquire similar resources. There can be little doubt about the advantages which they confer upon both staff and students.

Teaching methods

Almost all the staff we interviewed claimed to be using 'communicative' approaches to language teaching, and we saw and heard of very little to make us doubt this. Information from both staff and students confirmed that there was widespread use of teaching methods which were participatory, interactive and made direct use of the target foreign language. In contrast to most people's memories of language learning in school, we encountered no examples of teaching based on the study of literature. Instead, the materials being used were, as far as the teachers concerned could make them, relevant to the vocational needs of the students. Where course textbooks were 'set' for the students, these were used to ensure a structure for the course and to give the students a suitable reference tool, but did not dominate the course. All case-studies at least supplemented textbooks with teacher-produced materials, and some were entirely teacher-devised. The emphasis throughout was on the use of the language, and mostly on the use of the spoken language. This may seem too obvious to need stating, but it does illustrate the difference between the kind of teaching being carried out in these case-studies and more traditional approaches to the study of foreign languages.

Of course, this emphasis did not preclude the study of the written language, and many of the staff in the case-studies were careful to make this clear. Some did, however, find that the systems within which they were operating forced them into what seemed a sudden transition from

assessing the students' spoken language into asking the students to read and write in the foreign language. This seemed to be a particular problem to some of those who were teaching National Certificate modules or Higher National units.

Allied to this was a concern evident amongst many staff that there should remain a place for the teaching of grammar. Some staff were apologetic about this, as if they feared that this might appear to contradict their use of communicative methods. Yet they had good reasons to maintain the teaching of grammar as an aid to the students' production of written texts and to their understanding of the language. It was also clear to us that they were not talking about grammar teaching which was entirely divorced from the rest of the material with which the students were working, but that it was much more likely to spring from that material. This, as we understand it, is entirely in accord with the practice of good communicative approaches. If the myth is growing in language teaching departments in further and higher education that communicative teaching somehow precludes the teaching of grammar then it would be well for all if it were to be refuted as soon as possible.

The case-studies varied in the degree to which they were able to make teaching vocationally specific to the students. Customised courses were the most vocationally specific. The responses from the students in these courses suggested that they appreciated the precise focus of the teaching and the care taken in preparing materials for them. Staff in some other case-study courses felt constrained to adopt a more general approach because they had to deal with relatively disparate groups of students, or felt unable to predict what the students' vocational needs would be. Some staff also believed that it was not possible to be vocationally specific when teaching complete beginners. The experience of the staff in the customised courses would tend to suggest that it is possible, but there are clearly two schools of thought about its desirability.

Many of the students themselves gave a high degree of priority to the vocational purpose of their language learning. We would hypothesise that this could be a valuable motivating factor which the more general non-vocationally-specific approaches to teaching may not be fully capitalising upon. Where the staff in the customised courses were able to build upon the results of their needs analyses of the student groups, and tailor their teaching accordingly, this appeared to be reflected in a high degree of appreciation of, and satisfaction with, the teaching by the students.

A full needs analysis of all student groups would be difficult to undertake. In some cases it may be made impossible by the varied student intake and the lack of knowledge of their eventual destination. However, one message which does emerge from the case-studies is the importance to both students and staff of knowing **what** is to be learned and **why** it is to be learned. There were certainly negative examples in the case-studies where these aims were not as clear as they might be, or where there were conflicting views on them. The resulting uncertainty did not, in our view, enhance anyone's confidence in what they were doing.

Assessment

Staff raised a range of concerns about assessment. Almost all saw the relevance and advantages of using some form of continuous assessment and, where examinations were still in use, this had more to do with practical considerations than desirability.

Some staff considered that there was an undue amount of assessment, and that some assessment was too demanding or inappropriate for their students. Some also experienced problems with writing their own assessment instruments to an acceptable standard. These problems were particularly encountered in courses based on National Certificate modules or Higher National units. It is fair to say that these problems are not unique to the assessment of foreign languages, but are commonly faced by most staff assesssing National Certificate modules or Higher National units (*Modules: Teaching Learning and Assessment*, Black, Hall and Martin SCRE, 1991; *Units and Competences*, SCRE, 1992).

To some extent these problems are the result of the newness of some of these courses, and the relative newness of the assessment system which is being used. While the National Certificate, which was first introduced in 1984, cannot really be called 'new', there are many teaching staff who have only recently entered further education who have no previous experience of teaching and assessing in the ways demanded by National Certificate modules. Some of these problems may well be overcome as teachers and course organisers gain further experience. However, there is also a tendency, which is not confined to teachers of foreign languages, to believe that in these systems all outcomes must be assessed separately, sometimes repeatedly, and in the order in which they are presented in the module descriptor or unit specification. This is not necessarily the case. It is quite acceptable to SCOTVEC that the assessment for separate outcomes be integrated into one assessment exercise, provided the assessment remains valid for all outcomes being assessed, and there is sufficient evidence to demonstrate competence. Similarly there is no compulsion to assess each outcome in strict order as presented in the descriptor or specification (*'Scotched Myths', SCOTVEC Assessment Update, No 38*, June 1993, p4).

Relationship with vocational subject departments

We encountered some interesting examples of languages departments attempting to promote 'good will' and 'understanding' on the part of other departments in their institutions. One department had generated a degree of good will through providing translation services for other departments. In two case-studies the language departments were providing language teaching to the staff in other departments as a staff development exercise. Not only did the language teachers feel that this gave their colleagues a greater understanding of the difficulties of language learning, they also felt that it could help to give course designers an insight into how best to include languages in their courses. It remains an open question as to whether this perception was shared by their colleagues who were learning the languages, but it is an interesting strategy which may deserve further consideration.

It is clear that unrealistic demands were sometimes made of languages departments. Sudden requests for 'languages options' to be fitted into courses leave little scope for imaginative course design, and timetables which insist on teaching in three-hour blocks once (or at most twice) a week, cause problems of pacing, reinforcement and retention for languages students. The first of these problems can only be overcome by languages teachers making clear to their colleagues what is involved in developing a well-constructed language course which will suit the needs of the students. If they are successful in doing this they may not need to face the second problem. The three-hour block, if language teachers have to face it, demands a repertoire of materials and teaching approaches designed to break it into more manageable units. This is undoubtedly presents languages teachers with a considerable challenge.

We also encountered varying degrees of integration of the language teaching and the vocational subject teaching. The highest degree of integration appeared where the foreign language teachers themselves were responsible for the course. This particularly applied to the customised course case-studies, but was also apparent in the degree and postgraduate courses. Where the languages departments were seen as playing a servicing role they were sometimes left with little idea of the content of the rest of their students' course. In such circumstances it was even more difficult for them to tailor their teaching to the needs of the students. As we have already observed, a sound grasp of what the students need to learn and why they need to learn it provides a very beneficial focus for the design of a vocational foreign language course.

Practical considerations for teaching staff and senior managers

A number of observations can be drawn from the case-studies which teachers of foreign languages for vocational purposes in post-compulsory education may wish to consider. Some of these also have implications for senior managers of further and higher education institutions.

Getting the climate right

Many of the foreign languages departments in further and higher education institutions in our study found themselves performing a servicing role for other departments. In some instances it was felt that language learning was undervalued. There was felt to be a lack of understanding of what is involved in language learning and unrealistic demands were sometimes placed on the languages department. There is no simple answer to these problems. However, some departments were trying to address them by capitalising on what they saw to be a latent interest in languages amongst their colleagues.

Three examples of this which it was felt might promote interest in, and understanding of, foreign languages teaching included:

- Offering languages courses to staff in the institution as a staff development exercise.
- Offering languages courses on an 'open learning' basis to students in the institution.
- Offering translation and other language-related services to colleagues in the institution.

The perfect environment?

Our study suggested that in the view of teaching staff, language departments would optimally be based in a custom-designed languages suite, with a resource base tailored to the needs of students, ample time for course design and development, timetabling which did not place undue constraints upon teaching, and ample time for staff (both full-time and part-time) to meet, exchange ideas, and develop their teaching materials. Our discussions with staff suggest that the following might contribute to a good language teaching environment:

- A recognisable 'home base' devoted to the teaching of foreign languages. It was claimed this can provide an environment in which foreign languages are seen to be important, allow ready access to resources, and help to promote interchange of ideas between staff.
- A timetable which is suited to the language-learning needs of the students. Many languages teachers prefer their students to receive 'little but often'. However, if staff are faced with the constraints of, for example, a three-hour block once a week, it was the view of some staff that the block should, if possible, be broken into smaller, and more diverse, units of teaching.
- Time available for the initial development of courses. It was the clear view of some staff that good vocational languages courses cannot be pulled 'off the shelf' and just 'slotted in' to other departments' courses. Time is therefore required to plan and develop good courses.
- Resources which are appropriate to the needs of the students. Reflection on the case-studies suggests that the teaching materials which both staff and students are happiest with are those devised by the staff themselves. 'Set' textbooks may be a valued supplement, but few staff seem to have found the perfect textbook for their needs.

Other valuable resources include audio and video equipment, but at the boundaries of technological innovation (for example computer-assisted language learning) there are enough grounds for caution to suggest that development is best left to those with the necessary knowledge and interest.

- Part-time teaching staff who are fully integrated into the life of the department. A number of those interviewed felt that it was important to ensure that part-time staff are not denied access to classrooms, resources or equipment, and every effort should be made to allow them development time for new courses and to include them in department meetings.

Aims and focus of the course

It is not always possible to undertake a full needs analysis for all students, and even if it were, the mixed composition of some student groups would make it difficult to implement the results. Nevertheless, the case-studies suggest that there are benefits to be gained from providing a clear vocational focus for the course. Not least is the opportunity to capitalise upon the vocational impulse which motivates many of these students. This therefore suggests that:

- The course should be designed with a clear understanding of **what** the students need to learn and **why** they need to learn it.
- The course should draw upon subject matter from the students' vocational subject area.
- There are two schools of thought about the best approach to take with complete beginners: one approach stresses the need for 'general' language skills which are 'transferable' and will give the students 'coping strategies'; the other stresses 'vocationally specific' language which will be immediately relevant to the students and so motivate them. This is not an absolute dichotomy and the best approach will depend upon the needs of the student group.

Teaching methods

Most teachers of foreign languages for vocational purposes would already claim to be using communicative methods, and students appear to appreciate the active and participative teaching which they receive. Our discussions with staff in the case-study departments therefore persuade us that the following general points should be made about teaching methods:

- Teaching should focus on the **meaning** and **use** of the target language in realistic situations relevant to the students.
- The extensive use of the target language in the classroom is valued by the students and should be encouraged.
- This does not preclude the teaching of grammar, nor does it imply any undue concentration on the spoken language to the exclusion of the written language.

Assessment

The assessment problems faced by foreign languages teachers are not unique to them, but are shared with many of their colleagues in other departments. Assessment can take many forms, and will vary in its degree of formality, depending upon circumstances and the purposes for which it is undertaken. We would make the following general points about assessment:

- Foreign languages teachers are used to informal monitoring of the progress of their students. They should recognise that this is assessment which provides valuable information.
- Assessment should be thought of as a process of gathering evidence on the performance of the students, and not as 'tests'.
- Continuous assessment is preferable to an end-examination in that a much wider range of evidence can be gathered.
- Where National Certificate modules or Higher National units are being used, teachers should investigate the possibility of integrating the assessments for two or more outcomes into a single exercise.

References

BLACK, H., HALL, J. and MARTIN, S. *Modules: Teaching, Learning and Assessment*, SCRE, 1991.

BLACK, H., HALL, J. and MARTIN, S. *Units and Competences*, SCRE, 1992.

HM INSPECTORATE, *Modern Languages in Further and Higher Education*, SOED, 1991.

SCOTVEC, 'Scotched Myths', *SCOTVEC Assessment Update*, Number 38, June 1993.

Appendix A

Questionnaire for students

The levels of language skills (or modes) detailed in question 17 are derived from the Languages Lead Body draft National Language Standards (August 1992). These standards relate to the use of foreign languages at work and are defined at five levels in the four 'disciplines' of listening, speaking, reading and writing. They have since been revised and endorsed by the National Council for Vocational Qualifications (NCVQ) and the Scottish Vocational Education Council (SCOTVEC) and are intended to provide awarding bodies and employers with a recognised framework for assessing employees' competence in a foreign language.

The items in question 17 represent a distillation of information gathered from each of the following sub-components of the draft 'Standards' document.

- the overall **unit** descriptor
- the **element** title(s) which describe what someone can achieve using a foreign language, and the accompanying commentary
- The **performance criteria** which indicate what has to be demonstrated to show competence
- the **range statements** which define the instances in which evidence of competence is required

An example from the National Language Standards (May 1993), relating to listening at the most basic level, is given below:

> **Unit** L1.1: obtain information about predictable day to day activities by listening
>
> **Elements**
>
> The individual is able to:
>
> L1.1 Obtain specific details from everyday sources
>
> **Commentary**
>
> This unit recognises skills at a 'basic' level. Individuals operating at this level would be able to understand **simple** everyday spoken language, and obtain specific details from linguistically simple announcements, messages and broadcast items spoken clearly at a deliberate speed, with little or no sound interference.
>
> They would be able to handle material consisting of high frequency everyday or job-related language, identifying key points or details of a task. They would be able to follow simple instructions and directions, and understanding the gist of simple conversations on familiar matters.

Performance criteria

L1.1.1 the required details are obtained accurately

L1.1.2 where necessary, appropriate action is taken to confirm or clarify meaning

L1.1.3 appropriate action is taken on the basis of information gained

L1.1.4 the meaning of unfamiliar simple words or phrases is identified using contextual clues

Range

Sources: linguistically simple and high frequency sentences in the standard register, delivered clearly at near normal speed and free from distortion and loud extraneous noise:

- speech of others present
- broadcast speech, such as public announcements, TV or radio broadcasts
- telephone speech

Clearly, it would be inappropriate to attempt to put such detailed information into a questionnaire item. Our five levels for listening, speaking, reading and writing reflect the progression from simple, non-technical and yet work-related language to highly complex specialised language encapsulated in both the draft and final versions of the Languages Lead Body National Language Standards.

The Scottish Council for Research in Education

"Research in the service of education" is the motto of the Scottish Council for Research in Education. For over 60 years it has put this into action through a continuous programme of research studies in schools and other institutions across the educational system at all levels from pre-school to adult and recurrent education. It also provides a range of associated research, information and communication services. SCRE aims to develop documentation arising from its own research available to those who are interested. Reports in the Project Report series are brief accounts prepared for publication. Enquiries about SCRE publications should be addressed to Information Services.

RESEARCH
INFORMATION
EVALUATION
CONSULTANCY
for EDUCATION

BEST COPY AVAILABLE